Edited by
Henry Stead and Edith Hall

GREEK AND ROMAN CLASSICS IN THE BRITISH STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL REFORM

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For Utopian Dreamers

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1

Introduction

Edith Hall and Henry Stead

'Bœotia, choose reform or civil war!' thunders the oracle, as reported to the people of Thebes of Shelley's satirical *Oedipus Tyrannus; or, Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820, Act I.113). Shelley's Bronze-Age Thebes is blighted by famine, a failing economy, despotic rule and corruption in the government, army and state religion: it transparently represents Britain in 1820. Yet in the period covered by our book, from the French Revolution until the 1960s, Britain did always choose reform rather than civil war. And this was despite terrifying moments when some feared that the entire nation would indeed descend into violence, not only in the aftermath of such upsurges of popular radicalism as those provoking the brutal 'Peterloo Massacre', which took place in Manchester the year before Shelley penned *Swellfoot*, but also during the Continental revolutions of 1848 and the run-up to the General Strike of 1926.

This book explores the presence of ancient Greece and Rome in some episodes during the struggle for reform in Britain – the struggle not only for parliamentary and electoral reform, but for reform in diverse areas of economic, social and cultural life. Some reforms are manifested in legislation, such as laws which protect the rights of workers, or make full-time education compulsory for all children; others are shifts in sensibility or aesthetic taste which reflect and consolidate the democratization of culture, the spread of literacy, or increasing sympathy with the poor or the ethnically different. Other reforms take the form of schemes which promote improvements and modernizing initiatives, in mass health care, for example, or housing.

The volume began life at a conference entitled 'Classics and Class' organized at the British Academy by Edith Hall in 2010, where earlier drafts of some of the chapters (those by Roberts, Richardson, Stray, and Alston, and one of those by Hall) were delivered as papers. The additional papers have been commissioned since the award in 2013 of a major research grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council for Hall's project 'Classics and Class in

Britain 1789–1939' (classicsandclass.info) at King's College, London, and the appointment of Henry Stead as postdoctoral researcher on the project. Most of the contributors, including the authors of some of the newly commissioned essays (Hardwick, McConnell, Goff, and Simpson) are members of the project's advisory board.

The reader of this book will benefit from a short account of the wider scholarly context which has produced it. For it makes available just one part of the results of the research we are undertaking as part of the 'Classics and Class' project, which has a wider scope going well beyond the relationship between classical culture and reform. The aim of the project is fundamentally to challenge the limited existing model of the relationship between classical culture and social class in Britain. The conventional model assumes that the social function of knowledge of the languages and cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, restricted to a small minority, was primarily to maintain barriers between social classes. This model has been developed in the (themselves few) studies which address the role played by classics in social exclusion, notably F. Waquet's *Le latin, ou L'empire d'un signe* (1998), although the major focus of that study was the European Continent in the Early Modern period. Christopher Stray's fine *Classics Transformed* and two articles by Phiroze Vasunia use elite sources on educational policy and the British civil service exams to show how youths who had acquired knowledge of Latin and Greek were privileged in the later nineteenth century.[1] Recent research completed by Hall on classics-informed responses to the 1857 Indian uprising against British rule, to the campaigns for the abolition of slavery from 1770 to 1865, and on female classical scholars from the Renaissance to the twentieth century,[2] revealed that the prevalent perception of the historical relationship between classics and the divisions between citizens on the criterion of social class is likely to be distorted because the crucial voices – those of the working class – have yet to be heard.

This hypothesis has also been informed by the provocative approaches to literary communities developed in J. Boreil's *Les Sauvages dans la cité: auto-emancipation du people et instruction des prolétaires au XIXe siècle* (1985) and *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001), by Jonathan Rose, who was the keynote speaker at the 2010 'Classics and Class' conference. Although neither of these studies focuses specifically on the classics, they suggest that Greek and Roman authors may have had a greater presence in the lives and therefore memoirs and cultural output of working-class writers than is usually supposed. Although the exclusionist model is almost universally taken for granted, and conventionally supported by a few passages in canonical

nineteenth-century authors such as Dickens (on whom see Hall's Chapter 6 in this volume), Thackeray, Eliot and Hardy, this is because scholars have hitherto almost completely ignored the evidence for contact with classics produced by working-class people themselves (often unpublished autobiographies, memoirs, letters, records of recreational activities, political banners, leaflets), which our project is investigating.

The period we are examining is the time when class identity and conflict in Britain were at their most acute and self-conscious. The chronological scope is determined at the earlier end by the emergence of social 'class' as a category used in the modern sense after the French Revolution, as defined by E.P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963).[3] The term 'classics' has, since the early eighteenth century, been used in English to designate the ancient Greek and Roman authors, their languages and civilizations, and the institutional study of them. In this volume we have found it important to distinguish between 'Classics' as an educational discipline and 'classics' as the cultural products of ancient Greece and Rome, because – although the two often overlap and inform one another – they can, and often do, exist quite apart from one another. Sometimes the richest encounters with classical culture appear to have had very little to do with the academic field of 'Classics', which understanding has helped us to push the exclusionist model past its breaking point. For, while being excluded from Classics (and therefore sometimes from more self-consciously 'highbrow' versions of classics), a great many of the working and middle classes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain were very much *in*cluded in the cultural practice of engaging with classical culture. In the earlier decades of our period the practice of bypassing the exclusive classical education and engaging with classical culture anyway – or, if you like, the separation of classics from Classics – occasionally resulted in pitched battles in the ideological sphere (e.g. Stead's Chapter 4), which, somewhat counter-intuitively, both refute and reinforce the exclusionist model, depending on whether or not we look past the ideology and down to its material roots.

It is also worth noting at this point that within the present volume's period of study the picture is complicated by the fact that not only were classics going on beyond the reach of Classics, but formerly excluded demographics were also consistently 'infiltrating' higher social realms, partially through obtaining a classical education. There were, for example, the extraordinarily industrious working-class men, and many more middle-class men (and women), who were – by pure diligence and/or changes in economic fortune (or both) – able to gain access to a classical education. Some of them used the type of

publication exemplified by the *Encyclopedia Perthensis* (1816), aimed at the ambitious Scottish self-educator who could see himself mirrored in the frontispiece, receiving private instruction from the goddess of wisdom, Minerva (see the image on this book's cover). These self-education narratives include the highly visible but rare 'rags-to-riches' stories, telling the rise of illiterate manual labourers to lofty appointments at universities, many of which can be seen in the Classics and Class archive (classicsandclass.info). If these formally excluded groups did not encounter classics via the leading schools and Oxbridge, then they may have done so by way of the increasingly diverse array of those educational institutions which are less accustomed to the academic spotlight. These encompassed not only the 'minor public schools', which sprang up throughout the nineteenth century, reproducing to some extent the syllabus of their more established forebears, but also institutions such as numerous dissenting academies (from the later seventeenth century, including the influential Warrington Academy, established 1756), the University of London (established in 1836 as an examining body for dissenters), and countless more affordable (if not free) schools up and down the country. In the classical education of the dissenting academies a special emphasis was laid on the study of Greek, which was important for Biblical study.[4] A far more colourful and varied picture of British classics emerges from the canvas when the model of exclusion is lifted. We must again stress that this does not mean that the model is not true, but merely shows that much else is also true, including that which may appear to be contradictory. The dominant classes may have had the master key to the Classics, but this means neither that others could not gain entrance to the classics (a room in the same building, holding many of the same objects) nor that some did not make it their life's work to cut and distribute new keys, promoting access to all areas.

The term 'class' in the social sense begins in around 1770, the period of the Industrial Revolution and its decisive reorganization of society, when it began to replace the feudal terminology of 'rank' and 'order'. Our theoretical model, derived from the sociological studies by Anthony Giddens,[5] uses the term 'class' in a way that assumes that class was often the most important determinant characteristic in shaping people's lives. What is meant by 'class' in this volume and our wider study is the cluster of factors identified by Max Weber as creating class divisions – the objective criteria of property, income and occupation, combined with the subjective criterion of a collective sense of identity defined in class terms.[6] The focus on class also requires engaging with alternative conceptual and analytical categories such as 'mass' or 'popular' culture, associated with

communication studies, which mask the actual social position, workload and opportunities of specific historical subjects. The model proposed by M. Schiach in *Discourse on Popular Culture: Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the present* (1989), for example, obscures the real class divisions underlying the exponential growth in cultural output and accessible 'popular' publications during this era.

Although the experience of working-class Britons underpins our wider investigations, the results of which will be published later in a substantial co-authored companion volume *Classics and Class in Britain*, in the course of our researches it has become apparent that, when it comes to campaigns for reform, the leaders were frequently from the middle class rather than the working class. Their sympathy with the members of classes lower than theirs has diverse causes. Some of them were only one or two generations removed from ancestors who were in service, or agricultural or industrial labourers. Several came from religious backgrounds, and were attracted to support Chartism, the labour movement, socialism and communism because of their experience of Christianity, often of a non-conformist brand. Others, despite 'good breeding' and education, which, at least until the First World War and in the case of men, almost inevitably involved some engagement with Greek and Latin authors, had experienced acute poverty at some period of their lives (Dickens and Caudwell are important examples). For the classically educated women of the Independent Labour Party and for C.L.R. James in the 1930s, discussed in Chapters 12 and 15, their primary route into commitment to reform was via feminism or anti-racism.

To use the word 'reform' in the title of any historical study is to leap recklessly into a conceptual and political minefield. There exists widespread and often bitter contestation of the significations of the 'r' words – reform, Reformation, resistance, revolt, rebellion, revolution, radicalism – as well as some within the same cluster of signification in political history and theory which do *not* begin with 'r', such as gradualism, progressivism and modernization. This has been the case since long before Friedrich Engels first controversially proposed that the religious 'Reformation' of the sixteenth century was, in fact, the ideological mask of the early bourgeois economic and political *revolution*.[7]

In the period we are discussing, both the verb and the noun 'reform' could be used of any process by which a practice or system was consciously modernized, simplified, streamlined or improved, such as calendar reform, spelling reform, dress reform,[8] or reform in the techniques of financial book-keeping.[9] Yet in Britain, since the mid-eighteenth century, the noun 'reform', used without qualification, has historically most often designated parliamentary 'reform', as in

William Ford Stanley's *Proposition for a new reform bill, to fairly represent the interests of the people*, published in London in 1768.[10] But even parliamentary and electoral reform was originally called 'reformation', as is shown by the meeting in the Thatched House Tavern on 16 May 1782 of 'Members of Parliament friendly to a Constitutional Reformation, etc.'[11] The title and subtitle of William Cobbett's *Elements of Reform, or, An Account of the Motives and Intentions of the Advocates for Parliamentary Reformation* (1809) show that, nearly thirty years later, people still heard the close relationship between the idea of 'Reform' and 'reformation', with all the ideological baggage which the latter word had acquired in its usage, since the sixteenth century, specifically to designate *the* Reformation – that is, the Protestant Reformation of Christianity.

The '*re-*' prefix in English words with Latin roots, such as 'reform' and 'reformation', can imply other shades of meaning. There is often a sense that the alteration in the system in question corrects abuses of some kind. Take the 'great' Reform Act of 1832, to which several essays in this volume refer. Although it was generally called the Reform Act for short in its own time, its true title was the 'Representation of the People Act 1832', and its purpose was to 'take effectual Measures for correcting divers Abuses that have long prevailed in the Choice of Members to serve in the Commons House of Parliament'. If measures are 'correcting divers abuses', then a moral undertow to the terms *reform* and *reformation* becomes inevitable, and most of the people studied in this volume did indeed have a moral commitment, usually informed by Christianity, to altering society for the better. The notion of moral betterment is also central to the use of the word 'reform' in relation to 'curing' individuals or classes of bad habits or behaviours – criminals can be reformed into honest men, prostitutes into chaste matrons, alcoholics into abstemious teetotallers. It is in this sense that William Cowper asked in his 1785 poem 'The Task' whether literary satire could actually improve people's morals (2.320–1): 'What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed/ By rigour, or whom laughed into reform?'

A third implication of the 're-' prefix in *reform* and *reformation* can be that the improvement, amendment and alteration are somehow *re*turning the institution or practice in question to its authentic roots – it is less a modernization than a flight from decadence, a restoration, re-establishment or revival of a former, now neglected set of practices. This sense is most usually apparent in the description of religious orders founded or amended on the principle that their members need to return to original, stricter observances, such as the Benedictine Reform of the tenth century, or the Augustinian reform. Occasionally this is apparent in the discussion of parliamentary and constitutional reform, because many British

democrats – at least in the eighteenth century – genuinely believed that before the Norman invasions the Anglo-Saxons had enjoyed the equivalent of full male suffrage, since executive power had been held by the parliament known as the *myclegemot*, a convention or legislative body consisting of representatives chosen by *all* the people. When Joseph Gerrald, a republican campaigner for universal suffrage, was tried for (and convicted of) sedition in 1794, he said in his defence speech that he and his fellow radicals were trying to *restore* the ancestral right of the British to one-man-one-vote. But Gerrald was one of the earliest Britons also to idealize the classical Athenian democracy, which he saw (despite the Athenians' tolerance of slavery) as equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon *myclegemot*.[12] Parliamentary reform, for Gerrald and his colleagues, really did mean *reviving* an ancient system as well as radically amending the current one.

After the 1832 Reform Act, the dominance of parliament in the popular conception of 'reform' began to lessen as economic theory developed rapidly, under the influence of political and social reform,[13] and as the impact was felt of the pioneering work of Robert Owen and others who resisted the social and economic evils to which the Industrial Revolution had given rise. This philanthropic industrialist had been disappointed in most of his attempts in 1819 to persuade the government to introduce radical reforms of employment laws, and so devoted himself to nurturing voluntary associations and cooperatives which could create humane housing and working conditions, as well as encouraging worker education.[14] In the 1830s he started to use the word 'socialism' to describe the ideal model of society, in which profits were shared, and producers and consumers cooperated on friendly principles of mutual assistance. His ideas were later taken up by the Fabians, who wanted to achieve socialism, but, unlike Owen, believed that it could be achieved incrementally by gradual reforms of the economy and social conditions, as well as the extension of the franchise, introduced by state legislation.[15] The Fabian gradualist model was then officially espoused by the Labour Party in 1918: 'incrementally and by degrees, the party would gain support and pass legislation in an inexorable progress towards the socialist millennium'.[16]

The precise connotations of the term 'reform', whether as a noun or a verb, are often best understood within a particular context by looking at the terms to which it is opposed. In the context of abolitionism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, commitment to reform – the abolition of slavery by a series of legislative measures – was often opposed to 'immediatism', the demand that all slaves be emancipated completely without further delay, which was explicitly formulated by American Methodist followers of John Wesley.[17] It is conventional

to question whether the most effective route to a fairer society is radicalism or reform, and the issue is often discussed, as it was already in Karl Marx's day,[18] as though radicalism and commitment to reform were abstract conceptions which can guide political behaviour in urgent circumstances and near-emergency contexts. But in practice, in Britain during the period covered in this book, the choice was usually a practical response to the immediate situation. Some of the individuals in this book had joined the Fabians at some point in their lives, but – at others – found themselves engaged in violent confrontations between the police and the unemployed. Where reform is possible through statutory means, there is little need for extra-legal measures; where individuals have no vote or power, they become far more quickly radicalized and will use force, at least in self-defence, as a matter of course.[19]

Again, reform is often understood as a process of political change which deliberately and as a matter of principle avoids violence, unlike revolution. In his *Philosophical View of Reform*, written in 1819–20, despite the violence which had been inflicted on the peaceful demonstrators at Peterloo, Shelley explicitly said he was opposed to violent revolution; he advocated achieving the five reforms he recommended, in the spheres of finance, the army, the church and the judiciary, through simultaneous moral reform within the individual and institutional reform implemented through the law.[20] The mental opposition of 'reform' and 'revolution' also underlies the conventional scholarly view of the 1832 Reform Act, for example, as a legislative concession designed to avoid a violent confrontation between classes, with reform functioning 'as an elite response to a revolutionary threat.'[21] But this dichotomy is often unhelpful when trying to understand changes in any society. Specialists in the anti-slavery movement in America of the 1850s point out that there were groups who advocated non-violent revolution, and others who advocated using reform through legislation but allowed the use of violence in the pursuit of getting reformist legislation passed: Frederick Douglass himself moved from espousing the former position to the latter.[22]

In Britain, many advocates of reform, like Joseph Gerrald, were accused by their enemies of having used physical violence, or being prepared to use it, in order to wrest power from those who held it. But the accusation that they were advocates of violent revolution does not constitute proof that they were. When terrified by the popularity of Chartism, the British middle classes made much of what they tried to portray as a strategic split among the advocates of universal male suffrage, dividing those who advocated physical force from those who did not. They lionized Samuel Bamford, who began life as an ardent radical, because

they could use his stated objections to Chartism, and especially his autobiography (1844), to discredit the campaign for the Charter and imply that it jeopardized peace and social stability. After his death, Bamford was used to define the acceptable limits of political action in a working man, which allowed him to argue for reform but to partake in no political action beyond restrained verbal argument, and above all to put patriotism before any desire for change.[23] James Fraser, the bishop of Manchester, wrote in 1872 that Bamford was to be praised for believing that 'instead of wishing to create sudden changes and to overthrow institutions, it were better that ignorance alone were pulled down' and for maintaining that self-control and self-amendment of the individual was the only solid 'basis of all public reform'.[24] Yet the propaganda used against the Chartists, which alleged that they were almost universally prepared to use physical force, was certainly exaggerated: the Chartist poet Thomas Cooper, discussed in Hardwick's chapter, who was imprisoned after riots in the Staffordshire potteries in 1842, always insisted that he had never either advocated or utilized physical violence. On the other hand, Enid Stacy, a passionate campaigner in the early years of the Independent Labour Party, who was adamantly anti-war, was involved in regular scuffles with the police, and made no attempt to avoid them. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), unlike many communist parties in other countries, never explicitly advocated violent revolution, and often asked its members to vote Labour and to work to promote its socialist agenda through legislation. Christopher Caudwell, the communist writer studied in Chapter 14, who volunteered to fight fascism in Spain, was driven to join the CPGB partly out of his horror at Oswald Mosley's encouragement of his fascist Blackshirts to use violence against the Jewish population of East London in the mid-1930s.

The primary aim of the team of researchers who have collaborated with us on the present volume is to explore several overlapping cultural arenas in which people struggling to promote reform within British society engaged with the cultural property broadly defined as 'classical culture', that is, the texts, artefacts and history of the people of the ancient Mediterranean who spoke and left records written in the ancient Greek and Latin languages. The fifteen exploratory studies are arranged chronologically, spanning nearly two centuries from the French Revolution until the 1960s. Hardwick opens up the debate by stressing the complexity of the relationship between classical culture and British reform. She asks whether it is possible to write a history of the way that any cultural property was experienced by campaigners and activists at the 'grass roots' of movements for reform (interestingly, the figurative, political sense of the term 'grass roots' seems not to have been used until the early twentieth century, which

itself may say something about how the political and cultural experiences of the lowest classes of society were ignored or even denied altogether). She stresses that classical ideas, texts and images can, of course, be appropriated by advocates of both violent revolution and non-violent, gradualist reform. The very susceptibility of ancient Greek and Roman materials to reinterpretation from diverse political vantage points has been one of the most important guarantees of their cultural stamina and repeated rediscovery. But, as Habermas argued, the ways in which people learn affects their political agency. Hardwick draws on Habermas to ask whether social and cultural experiences that come within the framework of 'informal' education involved the raising of consciousness. She concludes that the relationship between Greek and Roman culture and the nature and directions of political consciousness, at least at the 'grass roots' of the body politic, is often messy. Not only were there often as many differences between different radical perspectives as between radicals and gradualists, but 'proletarian conservatism was never far from the surface, whether in aspiration for access to a literary canon or in acceptance of the norms of gender discrimination or of empire'.

The next four chapters analyse some of the classical presences – and absences – in literary media which played a role in promoting reform in the first six decades of the nineteenth century. Roberts tackles the problem of Coleridge's political views head-on. Like Wordsworth and Southey, Coleridge exchanged the revolutionary ardour of his youth for a church-and-state Toryism in his later years. Yet he always denied that there had been any fundamental change in his underlying views. By examining classical presences in two of Coleridge's neglected texts from the pivotal years of 1816–17, especially the *Lay Sermons* and *The Statesman's Manual*, Roberts argues that he sensed the potential both of classics to stimulate the imagination and thus animate tradition, and of 'Classics' to deaden culture and stifle progress. Coleridge is writing in a context where the need for reform – but also the danger of violent rebellion – were both sensed to be pressing: a disastrous famine had afflicted the north and west of England and Ireland in the wake of the 1813 Corn Laws and the end of the Napoleonic Wars.[25] The success of the landmark industrial action of the colliers of Bilston in 1816 suggested to many members of the ruling classes that proletarian revolution might be imminent, and the long shadow cast by the Terror which followed the French Revolution was never far from their thoughts. Roberts shows how Coleridge realized that, while things must change, and injustice provokes the drive for reform, war and revolution create their own injustices and tragedies and 'provoke the urge to restore order'. The tension between these drives is

expressed, in Coleridge's polemical literary prose, in a tension between classical Greece and Rome, and more specifically between the 'radical' early Greek thinker Heraclitus and the 'conservative' Augustan poet Horace.

Stead's chapter addresses the same period of political and ideological conflict as Roberts, but opens out the argument to include several different writers, asking what part the Greek and Roman classics played in the cultural war between British reformists and conservatives in the periodical press of the late 1810s and early 1820s. His particular focus is the conservative critical assaults upon those predominantly professional writers, artists and thinkers associated with the 'Cockney School', most of whom, although not working class, had attended neither university nor elite schools, and who clustered around the reformist poet and journalist Leigh Hunt. The Greek and Latin classics are powerfully present in these culture wars, both as a feature of the provocative style of the Cockneys at the time, and as a vehicle for Tory critics to display the superiority of their own classical learning. But the reactionary critics of the output of the reformist 'Cockney School' could not prevent the growing public perception that Hunt's careful and conscious exhibitions of classical erudition – but in accessible, lively translations – proved that people who were not 'scholars' could indeed navigate, as Keats put it in his famous poem 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer', the 'realms of gold'. Cockney classicism was instrumental in dispelling the post-revolutionary gloom felt in progressive and reformist circles in the 1810s, sending out a message that ancient Greeks and Romans, and their exquisite myths and poetry, belonged to everybody with a love of beauty and nature and the ability to appreciate literature in their mother tongue.

Richardson's chapter addresses one of the most striking of the nineteenth-century arenas in which the public accessed Greek and Latin classics, the type of musical and comic theatre known as burlesque. Burlesques of classical plays and episodes in Ovid were extremely popular from the 1830s to the 1870s, and assessing the extent to which their insouciant appropriation of antiquity had a political undertow is of crucial importance. As a subversion of the classical education, the cheeky Greeks and Romans of burlesque may have appealed strongly to cross-class audiences, including many people who had no access to the privileges such an education conferred. But such a 'familiar' treatment paradoxically implies a form of cultural ownership. An important factor in the ideological workings of classical burlesque is the social and educational background of the genre's authors. The majority were somewhat rebellious or disaffected members of the middle class. But, in a detailed study of perhaps the most brilliant as well as the most politically radical of all of them, Robert Brough, Richardson argues that

there was a moment of opportunity when burlesque very nearly rewrote antiquity to turn members of the working classes into heroic figures, and thus reshape contemporary politics. The moment on which he focuses is 1855–56, when the pain of the Crimean War was most acute – 'a bad time to be an aristocrat in Britain'. In his transparently republican *Songs of the Governing Classes* and his burlesque *Medea, or The Best of Mothers, with a Brute of a Husband*, Brough created an imaginary world of theatre in which to foster cynicism about the class system and champion greater egalitarianism. Yet, as Richardson poignantly documents, Brough's own chaotic lifestyle, poverty and debts compromised his ability to make any real difference to Victorian society whatsoever.

Brough's *Medea* burlesque, at least as realized by the incomparable transvestite actor Frederick Robson, was admired by Charles Dickens, the subject of the next chapter by Edith Hall. Dickens is central to any discussion of reform in nineteenth-century Britain, because his exposure of the hardships endured by the poor during the Industrial Revolution, as Karl Marx himself noticed, was instrumental in pricking the conscience of the well-to-do and even in the passing of specific and major pieces of legislation. But Dickens's relationship with the Greek and Latin classics, which has usually been dismissed as wholly negative, needs careful analysis. The essay distinguishes between, on the one hand, Dickens's systematic and bitter critique of the classical education on offer in mediocre private schools and its role in social exclusion, and, on the other hand, the diverse manifestations of classical material in his journalism, short stories and fiction. While an uncritical adulation of ancient authors is in his fictional characters often associated with hypocrisy and snobbery, there are interesting exceptions, especially in *Dombey and Son*, and the influence of the myth of Euripides' *Ion* may inform, at least in a subterranean way, Dickens's famous *Bildungsroman* novels *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. But the essay concludes that it was in his desire to listen to and reproduce in language the brand new rhythms and sounds of the mechanized, industrial world around him that Dickens's rejection of classicism is actually most palpable – the relationship between aesthetic and social reform is fundamental to understanding the presences and absences of the classics in Dickens.

At the heart of our volume, in Chapter 7, Chris Stray uses the concept of social closure developed by the classically educated sociologist Max Weber in order to stress how classical education was instrumental in maintaining the pernicious class structure of nineteenth-century British society. But he also shows how the role of school and university classics in social exclusion was challenged by educational reforms and an expanding new market in inexpensive

books for lay readers and autodidacts. Central to his argument is that the Greek and Latin classics have long constituted particularly valuable cultural and intellectual capital, to use the helpful concept of French Marxist Pierre Bourdieu. Fleshing out his broad argument with the recorded experiences of colourful individuals, including some of his own working-class ancestors, Stray locates the struggle between, on the one hand, the social uses of the exclusive classical curriculum and, on the other hand, the classics of the self-helpers and autodidacts of Britain, within the context of the new nineteenth-century world of mechanization – of railways, steam presses, stereotyping and lithography. The struggle for girls and women to access education in the classics is part of this account, as is the distinction, long treasured by the privileged, between elite training in the original ancient languages and the increasing familiarity of ancient texts among the less privileged public through inexpensive English-language translations.

The next pair of chapters shifts the emphasis from texts to visual art, with explorations of how a classical hero and a classical god made their presences felt in the visual environment inhabited by the working classes as they struggled to improve their situation in the long nineteenth century. Paula James shows how Hercules, the half-divine hero of superhuman strength, was irresistible to organized labour, having 'changed sides' from symbolically representing European imperialism and aristocratic superiority before the French Revolution. Hercules came into his own in British reformist politics with the same wave of political unrest in 1815–19 discussed in the chapters by Roberts and Stead. The bulk of her chapter is an analysis of a famous banner featuring Hercules used by the export branch of the Dockers' Union during and after their pivotal 1889 strike. This Hercules is a hero 'of and for the working people in their struggle for a regular and minimum wage, and for a dignity of labour. The single snake is not the many-headed hydra of Lerna but still embodies the multiple evils of exploitation, destitution and prostitution prolonged by the profit-making capitalists.' James shows how the design of the poster draws on numerous iconographic traditions, including photographs of contemporary body-builders, the elite art of Frederic Leighton, and possibly the designs of the socialist designer Walter Crane. In doing so, the image is not unproblematic, since the Hercules who is strangling the enemies of the working class is not altogether free from the triumphalism about the British imperial project which was shared by many of the poorest people in Britain.

Vulcan, the Roman version of the Greek craftsman-god Hephaestus, also enjoyed a high profile in the industrial art of the later nineteenth century, as

Annie Ravenhill-Johnson's chapter demonstrates. The lame divine foundry worker, sweating over his tongs and bellows, was a favoured figure in art from the Renaissance onwards, but it was with the Industrial Revolution and his importance as a symbol of the power of human labour to transform the material environment, by practising metallurgy on an epic scale, that Vulcan became omnipresent. Like Hercules, he can be a hero of and for the working class, and inspire and support them in their campaigns for reform. Reformist novels were written about working-class industrial heroes called 'sons of Vulcan'.[26] When the ingenious Lemuel Wellman Wright patented his amazing machines for sweeping chimneys in 1840, they were marketed as instruments in the campaign to prevent children being forced into the dangerous, terrifying work of cleaning chimneys: 'Wright's Patent Vulcan Chimney Sweeping Machines: the only efficient supporters of the law against climbing boys'.[27] Despite the Chimney Sweeps Act 1834 and 1840, which had outlawed the engagement of any child under sixteen as apprentice to a chimney sweep, forcing children up chimneys by lighting coals at their feet was still a nearly universal practice on account of the impossibility of enforcing such legislation and the lack of alternative methods. But Vulcan, too, is an ambivalent figure, as much a representative of the factory owners and industrialists in whose financial interests the iron and steel workers laboured. Classical gods and heroes – the inherited mythical forms of societies based on slave labour – will always sit in a slightly uneasy relationship with modernization, progress and reform.

A few years before the dock workers' strike of 1889, there had been signs of a profound awakening of concern among the British middle classes in response to publicity about the shocking conditions still prevalent among the working classes, especially in relation to health and housing. From about 1883 until the First World War there was a 'massive outpouring of best-selling literature on the subject in the thirty years before the First World War'.[28] The earlier wave of this included the Reverend Andrew Mearns' *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (1883), the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Class (1885), Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889), Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's *Poverty, A Study of Town Life* (1901) and novels depicting the horrors of urban slum life, especially Arthur Morrison's *Child of the Jago* (1896). The two chapters by Sarah Butler and Richard Alston ask how classical antiquity featured in the ideas and writings of middle-class reformers of this period in relation to health and urban planning, respectively. Butler shows how prevalent was the comparison between the urban poor of Britain and the proletariat of ancient Rome. She illustrates how the

different views and theories of the scientific community were infused, supported and given public resonance by reference to classical sources during the period when the perceived need to reverse degeneration became ever more urgent towards the end of the nineteenth century. Greek and Roman historical and philosophical sources, especially ancient images of Sparta and Plato's socially prescriptive *Republic* and *Laws*, surface in the discussion of insanity, eugenics, hygiene, fitness programmes, and pauperism, morality and marriage.

Reform of the human body was felt to require reform of the human habitat, and Alston's chapter traces the relationship between the understanding of the classical city and British discourses about reformed city building. He traces the evolution of the idea of the 'new city' from the neoclassicism of the nineteenth century through the anarchist and neo-medievalist roots of the Garden City movement, to the role of classicism in both communitarian thought and architectural representations. He suggests that the 'new towns' of the early and mid-twentieth century define themselves by their opposition to the industrial city. Moreover, the more radical manifestations of the Garden City movement offered a conceptual non-city, a Nowhere, which turned away from urbanism, both Victorian and classical. It was in 1898 that Ebenezer Howard published *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, reissued in 1902 as *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. But Alston also argues that the contribution of classical urbanism to the utopian dreams of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was made easier by a long history of the idealization of Greek culture, rationality, architecture and urbanism. But, in the focus on the *polis* Utopia, there was a requirement to look away, to avoid confronting the stasis-riven history of classical Athens, the perennial problem of inter-class violence and the hierarchical structure of ancient society. Only by disregarding these dimensions of the ancient city did it become possible to imagine modern cities in which class did not matter and people would live side by side in unified and ordered communities. As a Swiss-French architect and city planner succinctly put it in a single terse sentence, 'Revolution can be avoided.'[29] The engagement with the classical model worked as a distraction from the task of understanding cities with all their virtues and sins, from seeing those cities in their socio-economic context, and imagining wholly new utopias through which we might make our cities better.

As pressure to reform health and the urban environment grew from the 1880s, so did the need for a new, national working-class political party. The concept was supported across a range of progressive organizations, from the gradual-reformists of the Fabian Society to the most revolutionary trade unionists. Led by Keir Hardie, the new Independent Labour Party (ILP) was

inaugurated in Bradford in January 1893. In Chapter 12, Hall explores the background and education of several of the women who were influential in the early days of the ILP, and discovers that the opening up to women of university education and the teaching profession produced a new generation of articulate young feminists who saw the emancipation of all women as just one part of the humanist, egalitarian goals of socialism. The discussion centres on Katharine Conway, later Katharine Bruce Glasier, a Newnham-educated Classics mistress who became radicalized in Bristol during a wave of strikes and was the only woman among the fifteen members of the ILP's initial National Administrative Council. Other classically trained socialist women discussed in the chapter include Enid Stacy, Mary Jane Bridges Adams and Mary Agnes Hamilton (formerly Adamson, 1882–1966). The first three made their mark on the politics of reform through education, oratory and journalism; Hamilton wrote several respected books on ancient myth and history before being elected member of parliament for the Labour Party in Blackburn at the 1929 general election.

Education is also the central theme of Barbara Goff's study of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), which from 1903 onwards campaigned for the rights of working-class people to higher education. While some of the more radical trade unionists and members of the ILP, including Mary Jane Bridges Adams, regarded the WEA as far too conciliatory towards the ruling class and as teaching a syllabus which made workers docile and uncritical of the establishment, its achievements were considerable. It consolidated and augmented the achievement of earlier bodies such as the Working Men's College, the Mechanics' Institutes and the University Settlements, as well as the initiatives put in place at the universities of Oxford, London and Cambridge to provide University Extension lectures. Goff shows that classics was a persistent, if minor, part of the WEA's activities in its first two decades, and that reference to classical authors and ideas was felt to carry considerable persuasive force in discussions within and about the WEA, especially in its magazine *The Highway*. Students encountered the ancient Greeks and Romans primarily through one-off lectures on the Greek 'heritage' or through courses on the history of world civilization, of drama, of Europe or of political thought, although some dedicated courses on antiquity do appear on the programmes of some branches. Exposure to the ancient world frequently came via philosophy classes and the works of Plato. The WEA's importance in the rise of the working class in the first half of the twentieth century is demonstrated emphatically by the number of members of parliament after the Labour victory of 1945 who were or had been active in the organization: no fewer than fifty-six of them.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, British socialists became divided. Some members of the ILP left to join the new Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920. The CPGB became an important force on the British political scene in the 1930s, when it became attractive to a whole generation of progressive young thinkers and intellectuals. In Chapter 14, Hall discusses the remarkable although tragically short life of Christopher Caudwell, a CPGB activist and intellectual, who lived and worked among the dock workers of Poplar, East London. His poetry and novels, as well as his famous work of literary criticism, *Illusion and Reality*, are the products of deep engagement with ancient poetry and thought, especially Aristotle's *Poetics*. Caudwell is in some ways typical of the individual activists represented in this volume: he was middle-class in culture and education, but did not attend university, and was radicalized by early experiences of poverty. He wrote prolifically in several genres, and, although he was killed fighting for the International Brigade in Spain, has left a large *oeuvre* in which his engagement with a large variety of classical authors is apparent. Above all, he attempted to forge a new Marxist aesthetic theory which welded a materialist understanding of culture as the product of economic and social relations of production to an Aristotelian theory of the mimetic – and therapeutic – nature of art.

While Christopher Caudwell was working for the CPGB in London, another committed communist, of a more Trotskyite and revolutionary tendency, C.L.R. James, arrived from Trinidad and became closely involved with the campaign against European imperialism in both the Caribbean and Africa. In the penultimate chapter, McConnell explores an important play written by James entitled *Toussaint Louverture*, the text of which has only recently been rediscovered. It centres on the hero of the Saint-Domingue (Haiti) slave revolt, 'the Black Spartacus', of whom James was later to publish a famous biography under the title *The Black Jacobins*. But the play, which is heavily influenced by the form and serious, didactic purpose of ancient Greek tragedy, was produced in London in 1936 with the world-famous American actor Paul Robeson in the starring role. It urges both economic reform and racial equality. James had been classically educated, and his play's relationship with classics is multilayered. Toussaint reads Caesar's *Commentaries*, is configured as a tragic hero like Prometheus and is supported by a chorus. James thus uses classics to help him give dramatic shape to the inspirational revolt, thus offering his own intervention into global politics, the struggle for social reform, and the need to combat imperialism, racism and social injustice.

Among the many other committed communists in Britain in the 1930s was Denis Healey, later to become a prominent member of Harold Wilson's Labour

cabinet. Like most members of the CPGB, Healey was never in favour of violent revolution, but wanted to achieve socialism through legislation and moral pressure. The final chapter in the volume brings the story of the relationship between classics and reform in Britain right up to the second half of the twentieth century. Michael Simpson asks how the classical academic background of five members of Harold Wilson's modernizing Labour cabinet in the 1960s affected that government's policies, if at all. The very existence of these progressive politicians, of course, undermines any simplistic assumption that classical education tends to be associated with right-of-centre political views. These men were also all senior members of the government that commissioned the Fulton Report (1968), which recommended that the top level of the civil service should increasingly recruit professionals who were specialists in, for example, economics, rather than graduates in the humanities, and especially the Classics graduates, indeed specifically Oxford *Literae Humaniores* graduates, who had traditionally dominated Whitehall. Simpson suggests that his subjects' shared experience of an elite classical education may have levelled them with one another, even though their social backgrounds were different, and that their undergraduate engagement in politics in the political ferment of the 1930s would inevitably have placed them in dialogue with communists; they would have known, for example, Robert Browning, who went on to become a prominent academic, and had joined the CPGB while studying Classics at Oxford in the 1930s.[30] By examining some of the ex-classicist politicians' writings, Simpson concludes that their education did indeed condition their ideas and their commitment to modernization, even if this conditioning was subterranean and psychologically unconscious.

In Britain in the early twenty-first century, the modernizing zeal of the 1960s and the foundation of the Open University (1968) seem like distant memories. So do the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Race Relations Acts (1965 and 1976). Free university education has been phased out, sentiment against immigrants has rarely been so hostile, and the rights of landlords and employers – rather than tenants and employees – have recently been strengthened. Food banks have recently become a familiar sight in British cities. Young people are frequently expected to work for nothing on internships, and many low-paid workers have little economic security due to the prevalence of 'zero-hour' contracts. Under the much-debated finalized provisions of the Terrorism Act 2006, suspects can be held for twenty-eight days without charge, and there is pressure for a much longer period to be introduced: this has jeopardized an essential and hard-won civil liberty, originating in article thirty-nine of Magna Carta back in the thirteenth century. Even the

National Health Service is under persistent threat of privatization. Yet do we hear 'reform' in the mouths of politicians? No. And, ironically, the very language and terminology of social progress which has inspired generations is actively avoided for fear of appearing politically atavistic, and harking back to some rusted Age of Iron, coloured by best-forgotten class conflict and toxic propaganda battles and vilification of socialism during the Cold War. Could we really have misplaced our power to dream, to generate the utopias and Golden Ages so prevalent in human thought since antiquity? It would be giving in to the cynicism of the age, perhaps, to believe this. So we will not, any more than those WEA students who (as Goff's chapter shows) took a course on ancient and modern utopias back at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The present volume is just the first chapter in our struggle with the relationship between classics and social class, which aims to provoke a shift in the perception of the history of British classics, away from a conservative tradition of institutionalized elitism towards a brighter history of broadly inclusive cultural practice and inspired creativity. In it, the contributors have beamed some light into the deep shadow which the predominant exclusionist model has inadvertently cast over working- and middle-class experience of classical culture. Through their focus on social reform and its middle- and upper-class campaigners, a vibrant but overlooked diversity of engagements with the classical world is revealed. In times when the need for Shelley's 'unacknowledged legislators of the world' (the poets) is greatest, when they have encouraged people to see what is hidden, to dream of what they do not yet have, and to struggle to get it, historically – as this volume shows – the British (and not only the poets) have tended to look back and seek out ancient Greek and Roman precedent. It is not always pretty, and it seldom appears to have any direct impact on actual events. Be that as it may: 'The person who is ignorant of the past can never grow up fully to realise the potential of the future, since it is impossible to understand one's place in the historical sequence without understanding what has gone before.' Cicero said that (*Orator* 120). 'A people or a class which is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history.' John Berger said that.[31] ' "I'll let you be in my dream if I can be in yours"/ I said that'.[32]

2

Radicalism and Gradualism Enmeshed

Classics from the Grass Roots in the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-century Britain

Lorna Hardwick

Here's Trojan, Athenian, Greek, Frenchman and I,
Heaven knows what I was long ago;
No matter, thus shielded, this age I defy,
And the next cannot wound me, I know.

Ann Yearsley, 'Addresses to Ignorance, Occasioned by a Gentleman's desiring the Author never to assume a Knowledge of the Ancients' (Yearsley, 1994, 93–9)[1]

The creation of the modern nation, as a coincidence and convergence of geographical specificity and human solidarity . . . the nation as a unit of collective loyalty overwhelmed and subsumed all other shared forms of human identity as regional, linguistic, ethnic, class and religious solidarities were subordinated to what has been called the 'nationalisation of the masses'

(Cannadine, 2013, 68–9)

This chapter investigates some of the ways in which Greek and Roman texts and myths were experienced by 'grass roots' people in movements for political and social reform in nineteenth-century Britain. The main focus will be on the period from the middle to the late part of the century, with some attention to relationships with what went before and after. Representations of and responses to classical texts, images and ideas provide a significant strand of evidence in this period of conflict, change and containment. They provide insights into the internal and external 'management' of political movements and can be analysed not just as aids to mapping the extent and nature of political awareness in general

but also for their effects in the development – and repression – of individual and group consciousness.

Although classical texts and images in general have the potential to be used in conservative, gradualist and radical ways, some tend more in one direction than another. This may be because of material in the ancient text or image, or associations with how it was used in antiquity and/or in how it came to be accessed, interpreted and modified in the modern context. So far as the nineteenth-century evidence is concerned, I have used two criteria for inclusion in the material I explore: a source that is either produced by those not actively holding power (political and/or intellectual) OR accessed by such people. By 'grass roots' I mean those who are not in positions of the kind of power that gives them control over policy, resources or intellectual hegemony. However, this absence of direct control cannot simply be equated with class status, nor is it necessarily associated with radicalism and subaltern counter-discourse or with 'popular' culture. There are considerable overlaps in the class status of those who accessed popular media (from newspapers and subscription libraries to music hall and ballads), just as there are significant differences within the socio-economic classes themselves. Popular entertainment was in the nineteenth century (as now) enjoyed by a cross-section of the population; popular can include 'middlebrow'. And there is plenty of evidence that working-class people aspired to access 'high' culture.

Lived experience crosses class and status and sometimes dissolves perceived boundaries, even if only temporarily. Important examples of this include the deprivations of war and the bodily co-presence that is a defining characteristic of performing and spectating in the theatre. Furthermore, the lived experience of ad hoc communities can also increase awareness of divisions within them, even transferring the apparently powerful to the status of the marginalized. For example, in 1840 the abolitionist Lucretia Mott (1793–1880), who had travelled from Massachusetts to attend the World Anti-Slavery convention in London, was, with other women, refused permission to participate. Women were eventually allowed to sit in the gallery and listen; they were not permitted to offend against 'good taste' by speaking in public. Some male delegates showed their solidarity by choosing to sit with the women 'behind the bar' and recruitment to the suffrage movement increased.[2]

It is sometimes difficult to define individuals and groups who might be regarded as being part of the 'grass roots'. For example, among those whom I have excluded from the discussion is George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–80), whose deployment of classical motifs has been addressed by scholars.[3] Although

as a woman she was denied the franchise, and as a co-habitee with George Henry Lewes (1817–78) she was perceived as a threat to established social values and so was the object of moral disapproval, she nevertheless had the leisure and resources to develop her education (including her study of Greek), to travel, and to achieve contemporary and subsequent literary acclaim as a great novelist (albeit via a pseudonym).[4] More important, her use of classical material is not the hub of the political consciousness that her work communicates. Perhaps a rather more contentious exclusion is Gandhi, who paraphrased Plato's *Apology* into Gujarati in 1908, both to disseminate ideas about Greek political philosophy and its role in a democratic state and to draw an implicit parallel between his own 'gadfly' status and that of Socrates.[5] Gandhi was a privileged professional lawyer who used classical material to awaken the political consciousness of the people at the grass roots, who would then be part of mass action. But, sadly, the provenance of most of his work rules him out of this discussion.

The example of Gandhi's sphere of operation, however, does signal the extent to which narratives of class, nationalism and empire are interwoven in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much work has been done on the concepts and practices associated with working-class education and politics in Britain in the nineteenth century and also on the diverse manifestations of nationalism and imperialism. One thread in this chapter reveals how these two areas of political consciousness sometimes intertwined, and that exposure to Greek and Roman antiquity was infused with how national and imperial identities were perceived and communicated. So, the views formed by people at the grass roots responded to and expressed a variety of experiences and aspirations, both political and aesthetic. The overarching questions that will be asked of all the sources and examples discussed will be: what Greek and/or Roman texts and images were involved; who experienced them; who originated them and for what purpose; what reactions did they provoke (in so far as we can make judgements about that); how were they assimilated into the public imagination; and what light is shed on broader judgements that can be made about radicalism and gradualism in nineteenth-century cultural politics?

I have chosen examples that use classical material in situations ranging from mimicry, though gradualism, to radical dissent, and will comment on four main areas: education; drama on the page and on the stage; trade union emblems (with special attention to the use of Greek and Roman images in conservative constructs of gender and national identity); and poetry (ranging from Chartist poetry to Kipling's use of the ballad form). Radicalism, gradualism and conservatism are not mutually exclusive narratives. It is possible for something

or someone to be radical in one aspect and not in others, and so on *mutatis mutandis*. The multiple agencies involved in the generation, transmission, reuse and reworking of Greek and Roman texts and images can also help to reveal aspects of the relationships between classics and class that may be concealed when the focus is solely on the political and cultural leaders who have dominated the historical and aesthetic analysis that is often conducted under 'umbrella' concepts such as 'Romanticism' or 'The Victorians'. The shift is not just a question of content but also of conceptual approach. I will be placing 'lived experience' alongside, and as a check on, 'top-down' approaches that assume that it is always what Simon Goldhill has described as 'high-level intellectual, theological, university-led argument' that is being mediated instrumentally into popular culture through 'lower' art forms.[6] Analysis of particular art forms informs debates about the extent to which these imported into popular political consciousness cultural beacons from antiquity that might foster a desire for emulation.[7] Because of its traditional associations with high cultural value and its temporal relationship with successive 'pasts', the deployment of Greek and Roman material also assists in examining questions of double consciousness and false consciousness; did the 'grass roots' (men and women), as David Cannadine suggests, 'buy' the patriotic aspects of empire at the same time as they aspired to and imagined a different kind of national and civic identity that would empower them at home? Were the masses 'nationalized'? Were local and class and even national identities lost in the sea of empire? Analysis of how classical referents were used in the long nineteenth century can help to answer such questions, and I shall return briefly to this at the end of my discussion. To provide a 'window' into the main part of the investigation, I start by probing some of the tensions to be found in the relationship between education and Greek and Roman antiquity in the nineteenth century.

Education, classical texts and working-class culture

There has been some distinguished scholarly investigation of specific aspects of the relationship between classics and nineteenth-century education, for example in Stray's study of the changes in how classical subjects were perceived and constituted in (mainly) elite and middle-class education[8] and in Fiske's investigation of the ways in which female classicists used their knowledge to subvert conventional wisdoms, 'pushing the boundaries of knowledge beyond . . . an alienating and exclusive classical authority'.[9] Altruistic and 'proxy' education

was a significant driver for women to develop their classical knowledge in the nineteenth century and provided a convenient excuse for what might otherwise have been seen as unhealthy cerebral activity or even self-indulgence.[10] It would, however, be a mistake to conflate the constraints of gender and class. Although debates about the 'proper' role of women tended to link the education of women to their familial relationships and perceived duties, once access to education was achieved, it might be further restricted by class. This is particularly evident in teacher training. For example, teaching in elementary schools was seen as an occupation for working-class women, and it was only when teaching became more professionalized in the second half of the nineteenth century that it was presented as a suitable career for middle-class women.[11]

For non-elite groups, the hedge schools in Ireland brought together the classical heritage of Irish history and the Irish language and provided an escape from the denial of education to Catholics at the time of the penal laws.[12] Statistics recorded by the Second Commission for Irish Education (1824) indicate that of 11,823 schools over 9,000 were listed as 'pay schools', which received no public support of any kind, and of these the hedge schools were the majority. This suggests that out of 408,065 Catholics who were receiving education in Ireland at that time, 377,007 were educated in pay or hedge schools before the Irish National Education System was established in 1831.[13] The sources indicate that the fees charged in the hedge schools varied considerably and increased from those levied for instruction in reading (the cheapest), through spelling and writing to Latin.[14] They did, however, remain fairly constant through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries even though incomes rose. Nevertheless, since agricultural wages (the lowest in Irish society) averaged only one to two shillings per day, not all would have been able to afford Latin. Teachers were frequently just as poor as the labourers and were often peripatetic. Teachers and what they taught were therefore difficult to monitor or control. Nor was Latin thought desirable by the Ascendancy authorities, partly because of its association with the Catholic Church and partly because the texts that were circulated – perhaps as chapbooks carried by travelling pedlars – might include such works as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.[15]

Study of Greek culture could be considered equally undesirable; the novelist Maria Edgeworth's father R. L. Edgeworth, who was a commissioner for Irish education, thought that the study of ancient history could be subversive and in 1820 wrote that that the abridgements he had seen 'are certainly improper; to inculcate democracy and a foolish hankering after undefined liberty is particularly dangerous in Ireland'.[16] The notion that a limited curriculum was

necessary in order to ensure that the lower classes learned skills that would be useful for the work that they would have to do but should not include anything that might cause them to reflect on their 'place' in society is not, of course, confined to Ireland and Britain in the nineteenth century. The main points to take from the Irish context as indicators of issues to look for in other situations include the 'popular' and inexpensive methods of disseminating texts (including oral culture as well as chapbooks and the like); the perceived relationship between subversion and lack of established control of teachers and the curriculum; and the coexistence and possible mutual dynamic between cultural and political freedom.[17] It was also the case that the nationalist emphasis and frequent Anglophobia of Irish radicals sometimes marginalized or diluted issues of class solidarity, both within Ireland and in the external relations of nationalists. In 1914 George Bernard Shaw rebuked Mabel Fitzgerald concerning her son's education on the grounds that she should 'make that boy a good International Socialist … and make him understand that the English are far more oppressed than any folk he has ever seen in Ireland by the same forces that have oppressed Ireland in the past.'[18]

Recent scholarship on working-class history has shown that experience of classical material could have diverse effects. Jonathan Rose's comprehensive documentation of working-class intellectual life in Britain takes the story into the second half of the twentieth century and includes some discussion of the desire for and the impact of encounter with classical texts and ideas.[19] His research is particularly useful as a reminder that not all encounters with Greek and Roman material were politically subversive. For example, he records how in the course of the nineteenth century the dynamic of mutual improvement could become regressive, domesticated into a complacent working-class respectability that was suffocated by the remnants of Victorian culture.[20]

The cultural memories that grew out of the nineteenth-century experience in Britain also reveal some striking parallels with the topoi that emerge from the histories of the Irish hedge schools. In England and Scotland these include the image of the weaver who has a classical text propped up against his loom: for example, the editor of the *People's Journal* (founded 1858), William Latto, was a Chartist weaver who read from books propped against his handloom and had taken lessons in Latin from a Free Kirk minister, while J. Ramsay MacDonald (who before his career in national politics had been secretary to the Lossiemouth Mutual Improvement Association) had supposedly been given a copy of a translation of Thucydides by a ragman who kept it on his barrow.[21] Alfred Williams (1877–1930), who worked in the railway factory at Swindon, taught

himself the Greek alphabet by chalking it up on machinery and refused to erase it when asked to do so by a supervisor. Williams learned sufficient Greek and Latin to translate from Ovid, Pindar, Plato and Horace, but culturally this made him conservative, and a reviewer for the magazine of the Workers' Education Association advised him to make his own poetry less anachronistic.[22] Classical texts and ideas might simply be absorbed into a conservative canon, what Rose calls 'proletarian cultural conservatism'.[23]

Even in the more radical journals, the relationship between literature and politics could be uneasy,[24] but the increase in cheap general-interest periodicals forced the political journals to broaden their base. In 1840 the *Chartist Circular* appropriated Homer, Aesop and Socrates as 'sons of the proletariat', alongside Shakespeare, Milton, Defoe and Dr Johnson.[25] There were tensions between direct action radicals and the 'Knowledge Chartists', who promoted intellectual development and freedom as the political priority.[26] William Lovett (1800–77) argued that formally authorized education could become oppressive 'when the individualism in their nature is checked by education, and endeavoured to be crushed out of them by the mandate of a majority'. Freedom would be lost when the poorest labourer 'is constrained to abandon his resolution, to conform to the routine of the majority, and to make their aspirations the standard of his own'.[27] For the Knowledge Chartists, direct personal encounter with works of literature and philosophy was seen as liberating. However, formalization of the sometimes ephemeral mutual improvement societies into Mechanics' Institutes could be dominated by the middle-class liberals who provided the necessary finance. Radicals thought this could become a threat to authentic self-improvement.[28]

Autodidacts, mutual education and political consciousness

At this point, I want to focus on just one piece of this jigsaw and consider the vital fact that the majority of extended working-class engagement with Greek and Roman material was by adults, and that – within this group – a significant proportion of it involved self- or group-directed study and experiment. This opens the way to considering the utility of theories that have been developed to describe possible relationships between adult learning and social action. Of these, the most illuminating is the relationship between theories of knowledge, adult learning and social engagement, and especially identification of the types of consciousness that could be developed (naïve, critical, magical). An influential strand in adult education pedagogical theory has drawn on the potential of

Habermas's epistemology, formulated in his *Knowledge and Human Interests* (*Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 1968) and *Theory of Communicative Action* (*Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, 1981), for categorizing ways in which adults learn.

Habermas identified three main categories. The first involves learning through work and leads to action that can be termed instrumental. The second covers the practical aspects of interaction for communication and interpretation, but is largely framed by what is 'given'. The third category can be termed emancipatory and involves self-knowledge, self-reflection and a transformation of perspectives. This is the domain that has been of the greatest interest to adult educators. It has been described as 'the learning process by which adults come to recognize their culturally induced dependency roles and the relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them'.[29] A variant on this approach is Freire's concept of 'conscientization', a process that makes problematic the social roles and practices that are taken for granted in the norms of a particular society. Freire makes a distinction between a naïve consciousness that recognizes a situation but accepts its causes as established 'facts', critical consciousness that addresses the underlying causes, and 'magic consciousness' that can recognize situations but attributes them to a superior power (social, religious, economic) over which it has no control and to which it must (fatalistically) adapt. Naïve and magic consciousness underpin deference cultures. Freire thought that only critical consciousness delivers the understanding that can lead to critical action.[30]

Similar distinctions, albeit untheorized, underlie the approaches that can be summarized under the byline 'Really Useful Knowledge'. The term was a skit on the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK), which was one outcome of the new forms of education that developed in the 1820s and 1830s, others being the Mechanics' Institutes and schools for very young children.[31] All of these attracted criticism from radicals on the grounds that they were actually, or potentially, constraining. *The English Chartists' Circular* (ECC) commented on the SDUK's 'determination to stifle inquiry respecting the great principles which question their right to larger shares of the national produce than those which the physical producers of the wealth themselves enjoy'.[32] The question was, how else was education to be achieved, especially by those with no money and very little leisure? The answer was to do it themselves. The defining characteristics were informality and communality (pubs, coffee houses, reading rooms, travelling lecturers and the radical press), and the focus and 'content' included the ability to understand existing economic, social and cultural circumstances plus the fostering of the desire to do something about them.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the focus gradually moved to the individual (self-education) or to a progressively depoliticized 'mutual improvement'. In the rest of this chapter I look at some examples of social and cultural experiences that come within the framework of 'informal' education and consider the extent to which they can be said to involve the raising of consciousness, and whether or not that consciousness is best described as critical, naïve or magical. A succession of thresholds has to be met before it can be claimed that classical material enabled 'grass roots' people to develop critical consciousness AND to translate this into social and political action. Significantly, some art forms were experienced by much larger numbers than was the case with the autodidacts. First on my list is theatre, which brought together audiences that contained a cross-section of classes, occupations and political views.

Drama and burlesque: on the page and on the stage

Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh in their seminal book *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660–1914* (2005) reflect on the importance of performance for investigation of the nature and effects of imagination. They argue that research into performance history can

> hold up a mirror to the shifting assumptions and contingent historical perspectives which have been brought to bear on these (i.e. Greek and Roman) texts in the most public arenas of consumption. But performance history also constitutes time travel into a much more personal, individual arena of human history. It offers privileged access to the private imaginative worlds of the members of previous generations. Theatre critics have long been aware that there is something very special about the immanent presence of live performance in the memory. Far from being an ephemeral art, which happens, comes to an end, and vanishes without trace, a compelling theatrical experience can leave a much deeper impression on the memory even than the printed word or painted image.[33]

These are large claims. They draw on Kierkegaard's presentation of theatre as a paradigm of the aesthetic consciousness and they chime with Erika Fischer-Lichte's arguments for the transformative power of performance, in spite of (even, because of) its ephemerality.[34] Fischer-Lichte holds that the bodily co-presence of actors and audiences brings the individual imagination into a collective arena. For the purposes of this discussion, I would be content with a

slightly more cautious position which merely holds that performance (and thus the histories of performance) can mark high points in the individual and public consciousness that in turn feed into the construction of personal and collective memories. These in turn mark subtle shifts in the way in which people look on their world and its possibilities.

From the end of the eighteenth century there had been significant developments in the ways in which plays and long poems based on Greek and Roman material were presented and interpreted. In 1776, in the aftermath of the American Declaration of Independence, a tragedy on the theme of colonial conflict had been staged at Covent Garden (6 December). It was so popular that performances continued through the winter and it was subsequently revived. The play was *Caractacus*, written by a progressive Yorkshire clergyman William Mason (1724–96), and it presented the theme of ancient Britons' resistance to the Roman army. The play was conceptually based on the work of Tacitus and Suetonius, although the plot was thought to be modelled on Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, with Mason's druids singing of ancient Celtic resistance to Roman rule, and thus making a glorious melange that allowed the identification of ancient Britons with Greeks.[35] The impact of the play is underlined by the recitation, during a meeting of Shropshire Whigs opposed to the war, of additional lines that urged independence for the colonies.[36] At least one possible effect of the 1776 performances was the equation of Caractacus with the American rebels and the Roman army with the British military; support for American independence was strongest in Celtic areas of Britain, including the northern parts of Wales.[37]

The entertainment value of figures from ancient British history was also shown in many examples of burlesque, a genre that crossed popular and elite contexts from music halls to St John's College, Oxford.[38] Noteworthy examples include *Boadicea the Beautiful* and *Harlequin Julius Caesar and the Delightful Druid* (titles from a published collection, 1865). Burlesque was a distinctive medium that covered well-known texts and stories, ranging from Greek tragedy and Ovid to Shakespeare and the *Arabian Nights*.[39] Its heyday was between the 1830s and the 1870s (after which it was overtaken by light opera and operetta, such as those by Gilbert and Sullivan). Burlesques based on Greek and Roman texts and themes were a significant part of the repertoire; to take just one example, in 1865 London theatres staged five new ones, including an *Odyssey* and *Prometheus Bound* as well as an *Echo and Narcissus*.[40] Audiences might be large, especially at holiday times.[41]

Jonathan Rose's study of working-class culture attests to the 'levelling message' embodied by burlesque both as an art form and as popular entertainment. In late

eighteenth-century poetry, Ann Yearsley's 'high-wire burlesque' had transformed great figures from Greek and Roman history and literature into 'Hogarthian lowlife', with Horace cast as a street-sweeper, Ajax a butcher and Clytemnestra a Billingsgate fishwife.[42] The point with burlesque, however, was not only that it reclaimed classical figures and stories for popular culture but that in so doing it provided a fresh and sometimes devastating critique of the attitudes of a society that had elevated them into figures of cultural authority and even reverence. On the nineteenth-century stage, with its large and diverse audiences, burlesque provided a physically dynamic counterpart to the political cartoons in printed newspapers that exploited Greek and Roman figures and myths to mock current affairs.[43] As a theatrical style, burlesque might incorporate mythical themes, elaborate stage machinery and visual effects combined with the doggerel rhyming verse that was its oral medium and provided verbal tricks as well as rhythms that served to debunk the way in which politicians and the highbrow press quoted from classical authors.[44] The novelist Charles Dickens had a different perspective and wrote to Bulwer Lytton in 1867 that the public could only be induced to go and see a Greek play if it was in the form of burlesque.[45]

It is clear that burlesque theatre appealed to a cross-section of social groups. The professor of English literature at University College London, Henry Morley, wrote in the middle of the century that 'There is a large half-intelligent population in London that by bold puffing can be got into a theatre. It numbers golden lads and lasses as well as chimney sweeps.'[46] There is also an engraving by 'Phiz' that shows an audience of the mid-1850s with the affluent sitting in the boxes, the middling folk in the stalls and the least affluent standing in the gallery. The Standard Theatre in the East End of London (then synonymous with a working-class population) was the largest in Britain and attracted 60,000 to see the staging of John Heraud's *Medea in Corinth*.[47] There is, then, good evidence for the importance of popular theatre and especially burlesque as a means through which working-class people could and did gain an entertaining perspective on Greek and Roman figures and stories, and there is an argument by extension that, since burlesque as a medium is an important vehicle for 'sending up' past and present authority, classical material is in the interesting position of being both a means and a target. That Greek and Roman material was popular does also presuppose that audiences had an outline familiarity with the stories, if not necessarily with the texts and the languages.

It is harder to arrive at judgements about the extent to which the experience of tragedy and burlesque transformed political consciousness into radical critique, as opposed to naïve awareness (in Freire's terms). In the absence of

significant primary evidence from individual members of the audience, the aims of the leading practitioners are relevant. The best known are Thomas Talfourd (1795–1854), whose productions of Greek plays are associated with the Theatre of Reform of the 1830s, and his star actor William Macready (1793–1873), a strong republican. Talfourd was a grandson of the Manse, a grammar school boy from the lower middle class who was too poor to progress to university. He became a radical MP, committed to universal suffrage and instrumental in passing legislation to permit separated wives to see their children. He gave a passionate speech in Reading Town Hall after the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 calling for toleration of democracy: 'Free and open discussion is the Promethean heat, without which the noblest constitution would be useless.'[48] Talfourd's *Ion* was revived several times in London right up until the 1860s and was also popular in France and the United States up to the beginning of the twentieth century. The published text was reprinted several times. This play, together with *The Athenian Captive* (also inspired by Greek tragedy), was seen as a radical political commentary on political despotism and an incitement to reform. *Ion* was also full of non-conformist religious fervour; Talfourd's political and theatrical work indicates that he thought that moral and social reform went together. This brought him some criticism that picks up the distinctions made earlier in this essay: Macaulay wrote that 'Ion is a modern philanthropist, whose politics and morals have been learned from the publications of the SDUK.'[49]

Taken together, then, the evidence from history plays and variations on tragedy, together with the medium of burlesque, gives Greek and Roman material a substantial place in public entertainment and imagination, but it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the extent to which this developed critical consciousness of the underlying causes of social conditions, let alone whether it was decisive in prompting radical action from people at the grass roots. The next section of my discussion focuses on an art form that was developed with the direct aim of making political statements and promoting class solidarity.

Trade union emblems

A recently published study by Annie Ravenhill-Johnson (2013), in collaboration with Paula James, provides a unique opportunity of bringing together study of the Graeco-Roman elements in the emblems and the other images used to promote worker solidarity. In particular, the trade union banners and other emblems provide a window into the 'public imagination', partly because they

were familiar both to their aficionados and to the wider public and partly because they represent a non-text-based *associative* function that is an important part of the public imagination. Ravenhill-Johnson refers in her Introduction to 'the expectation that mythological figures and motifs might be familiar, even if their full import and "back stories" were grasped only by the cognoscenti'.[50]

Especially when taken in conjunction with evidence discussed by Jonathan Rose in his study of the British working classes,[51] the evidence from trade union banners suggests not only that considerable artistic ingenuity was needed to construct a visual narrative but also that the users' awareness of nuances and the dual or even multiple implications of the designs might be greater than has sometimes been allowed.[52] However, it would be a mistake to lump together working (and unemployed) people in an undifferentiated way. Iconography changed in the late nineteenth century as some workers gained the franchise and new unions of the unskilled were formed. Particular aspects have special interest for classicists – for example the images of Heracles and Vulcan.[53] Here I want to make just two points. It has frequently been argued that the dominant ideology is nevertheless embedded in trade union emblems, that the different sections of the working-class movement expressed a view of their role in society and their contribution to it and that this expression also carried, often uncritically, elements of the dominant culture of the time.[54] There is some support for this judgement from the use of abstract representations, for instance in the depiction of female figures from antiquity that morph into Britannia (earlier conflated with Boudicca, and by the nineteenth century associated variously with Gloriana and Queen Victoria).[55] Britannia appears on many certificates, sometimes specifically labelled to indicate her association with commerce. The Amalgamated Stevedores' banner (1889 by Tutill) shows Britannia draped in the Union flag, with an English lion at her feet and behind her four red ensigns, the badge of merchant shipping. On some early twentieth-century emblems the shield has a vague outline of a Union flag. Such stereotyping was not far removed from that found in *Punch* – a cartoon of 23 September 1893, referring to an incident in which protesters had been killed, showed British soldiers and miners as Mars and Vulcan respectively (the editor, Sir Francis Cowley Burnand, also wrote classical burlesque).[56]

The relationship between subject matter and creative agency is sometimes problematic. For example, the designer Walter Crane was responsible for many trade union emblems. His design for the *Triumph of Labour* (1891) adapted the visual architecture and imaginative associations of the Roman triumph and turned it into a procession of the workers of the world. However, although he is often described as a socialist,[57] Crane was also in receipt of other commissions

that required him to represent conventionally idealized 'family' values. The nature of these commissions, which included illustrations for children's books and domestic wallpaper, raises questions about the extent to which crossover of patronage and of technique mingled middle-class Victorian attitude to women with the gender associations of the Graeco-Roman mythical figures that appeared in his emblems. Certainly Crane's representation of contemporary female workers was minimal or entirely absent.[58] Nor is this all. Crane's trade union banner design allied British Justice with Rome and John Bull. This fractured the earlier association between British Justice, Rome and Liberty, which were portrayed together in the context of the 1790s, notably in a cartoon by H. Holland 'Don Dismallo Running the literary Gauntlet' (1790).[59] Crane's iconographic shift provides one more small piece of evidence testifying to the dispersal of the radical reform impulses of the 1790s into the gradualism of the mid- and late nineteenth century.[60]

Nevertheless, despite the constant dangers of domestication within the dominant narratives of respectability and empire, trade union iconography could also accommodate statements of workers' solidarity that went beyond Britain. The 1889 banner of the Amalgamated Stevedores' Protection League shows an Australian emblem with the emu and red kangaroo in the roundel immediately above Britannia.[61] This may encode recognition that, in the Great Dock Strike of 1889, Australian wharf workers sent more than £25,000 to London's starving dockers. In a dockside scene, British and Australian workers shake hands across the central figure of Britannia. This is doubly subversive because of Australia's former status as a penal colony. Another image from the 1880s uses similar iconography but extends the scope internationally with lettered strap work at the top of the certificate, just below the image of the handshake – 'The Grip of Brotherhood the World Over'.[62] These examples show that we are not dealing with simple polarities of nation and 'other', but nor are we dealing with the kind of subversion that rejects the dominant images of Britannia, the lion and the flag. Such internalization of the discourses of empire and nation in the Trades Union movement demonstrates the extent to which they were fighting for admittance into the civic realm rather than aiming at its overthrow.[63]

Poetry

I referred earlier to the links between the Chartists and use of classical texts. One of the best known is Thomas Cooper (sometimes called the shoemakers'

poet, b. 1805). Cooper was an autodidact, learning Latin and Greek on his own. He became a tutor at Lincoln Mechanics' Institute. He was committed to universal male suffrage and action on behalf of the poor and, on an international level, opposed imperialism. The extent and limits of his radicalism reveal a contrast between his ameliorative approach and that of physical force Chartists such as Ernest Jones.[64] An avid reader, he valued not just the power of fiction to instruct but also 'the charm it exercised over the human mind'.[65] However, his aesthetic consciousness was by no means uncritical, as is shown by his comment on Homer's *Iliad*: 'What matchless beauty, what deep truth, what life-like pictures of humanity . . . and yet it enthrones the bad passion for war'.[66]

Cooper particularly deprecated the effect that *The Iliad* was said to have had on Alexander the Great. One particularly inflammatory speech of Cooper's (at Hanley 1842) began with a catalogue of conquerors, including Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, who had all shed the blood of millions. He described how the conquerors of America had nearly exterminated the Native Americans, and excoriated British oppression of the Irish. His long poem *The Purgatory of Suicides* (nine hundred stanzas: fine poetry it is not) was written in Stafford Gaol when he was imprisoned for sedition.[67] Two points are important as indices to the extent of Cooper's radical consciousness and the role of Greek and Roman material in his thinking: firstly, the implications that British commercial interests in India are linked to the predicament of the working classes internationally, and secondly, that Cooper uses an Indian sage (Calanus, who figures favourably in a number of ancient sources that deal with Alexander – Plutarch, Arrian, Philo). Cooper's Calanus instructs the Greek philosophers about the utopian possibilities of a levelled democratic society and lectures them on feeding the destitute. Cooper's poetry provides further evidence in favour of the argument that the 'India' question inspired the energy of radicals in Britain to make links between empire, its association with Britishness and the exploitation of the working class domestically.[68] The multiple valencies and trajectories of poetry, however, could bring antiquity, the British Empire and grass roots people into association in different ways. The hugely popular poet Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) gains admittance to this discussion because of the poetic forms he used and for the ways in which he brought Greek and Roman material into public sensibility.

T.S. Eliot's 1941 essay on Kipling brings out the importance of Kipling's use of ballad forms and modalities and probes links between his poems and topical events – 'an immense gift for using words, an amazing curiosity and power of observation with his mind and with all his senses, the mask of the entertainer

and beyond that a queer gift of second sight'.[69] Kipling was born in India, where he spent his early years. He returned as a young man to work there. He also spent time in South Africa, including during the Boer War, and discussed his experiences at length in his memoir *Something of Myself* (1937). He is interesting because he was both a believer in empire and a critic and wrote popular/middlebrow ballads, often using vernacular idiom, without being a man of the people (although his memoir shows how he valued shared experience). Kipling used a comparison with Homer to characterize both his own travels and his ability to seize on the experiences it offered:

> When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
> He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;
> An' what he thought 'e might require,
> 'E went an' took – the same as me!
>
> Rudyard Kipling (Introduction to the Barrack-Room Ballads in *The Seven Seas*, 1892)

A second well-known piece draws on the experience of Romans in Britain to provide a double perspective on British attachments to India:

> 'Let me work here for Britain's sake – at any task you will –
> A marsh to drain, a road to make or native troops to drill.
> . . .
> Legate, I come to you in tears – My cohort ordered home!
> I've served in Britain forty years. What should I do in Rome?
> Here is my heart, my soul, my mind – the only life I know.
> I cannot leave it all behind. Command me not to go!'
>
> Rudyard Kipling, 'The Roman Centurion's Song'

Tim Kendall has pointed out how Kipling's reputation suffered after the First World War, partly because his major poems, such as 'Epitaphs', brought home to readers the international impact of the war and gave 'equal honour to the Hindu sepoy, the VAD nurse, the RAF pilot, the drowned sailor, the civilian bombed in London, and the victim of conflict in Cairo or Haifa'.[70] Kipling's insights are underpinned by his sense, derived from his knowledge of Greece and Rome, of the spatial and temporal affinities between experience of war and empire in antiquity and in his own time.[71] By including a substantial section of music hall and trench songs in his anthology of First World War poetry, Kendall shows how popular lyrics could be adapted according to circumstance and audience, combining satire with an almost fatalistic acceptance of the situation.[72]

It will be clear from the examples I have discussed that this 'grass roots' picture of the relationship between Greek and Roman culture and the nature and directions of political consciousness is often messy. I see the Greek and Roman aspects of nineteenth-century thought and action as being like the base of a triangle, providing a degree of commonality but also allowing sometimes startlingly different angles and trajectories in which naïve political consciousness can morph into critical consciousness and also vice versa. Many experiences of Greek and Roman material contain elements of both.

The topic also has the potential to inform wider debates in modern historiography. For example, in his 2013 book *The Undivided Past: History beyond Differences*, David Cannadine examined the implications of historians' use of analytic and explanatory categories such as religion/nation/class/gender/civilization, arguing that they are divisive and undermine the aspirations and practices associated with humanism. My discussion here suggests the contrary: that to address questions about political consciousness in the nineteenth century it is necessary to look at the interweaving of ideas about class, religion and empire and at notions of education and civilization, without keeping them rigidly apart. Furthermore, mapping how Greek and Roman material was experienced and communicated reveals labyrinths in the development and repression of political consciousness. Analysing how Greek and Roman material was experienced and used by disempowered people is a useful tool for exploring the wider contexts and types of political consciousness. How Greek and Roman material was used and experienced suggests that there were sometimes as many differences between different radical perspectives as between radicals and gradualists. It also shows that proletarian conservatism was never far from the surface, whether in aspiration for access to a literary canon or in acceptance of the norms of gender discrimination or of empire.

3

Coleridge's Classicized Politics

Heraclitus and *The Statesman's Manual*

Adam Roberts

All the major Romantics were political radicals in their youth, and some maintained radical political affiliations to their death (in many cases, of course, their deaths came young). But, famously, three of the most prominent did not. Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge each performed an ideological *volte face* from a youthful radicalism eager to promote social revolution to an elderly church-and-state Toryism. As is often the case with individuals who follow this particular ideological trajectory, then and now, all three denied that there had been any change in their underlying principles. Not many people have believed this denial, then or now. Southey's appointment as poet laureate in 1817 prompted his enemies to try to embarrass him by reprinting, without his permission, his politically incendiary early play *Wat Tyler*. Questions were even asked in the House of Commons, and Hazlitt mocked Southey's inconstancy. Browning recorded his disgust at Wordsworth's apostasy, which he attributed to the Establishment 'bribe' of (again) the laureateship: 'just for a handful of silver he left us/ Just for a ribband to stick in his coat . . .' .

Coleridge is a more complex case. Close to both Wordsworth and Southey, he was in his youth ardent in his support for the French Revolution – only a fragment of the ode he wrote celebrating 'The Fall of the Bastille' survives, but it is impossible to mistake its passion. But his disillusionment set in relatively early; 'France: an Ode' was written in April 1798 (its working title was 'Recantation: an Ode'). His reputation as a radical trailed with him into the 1800s, but by about 1810 a change in his political allegiance was being widely noted, as something either to celebrate or to condemn.[1] Coleridge insisted that there had been no change. In the *Biographia Literaria* – published in 1817, a year with which the present chapter will be much concerned – he discusses politics in a pro-Burkean, anti-revolutionary manner; but also declares:

> In the rifacimento of THE FRIEND [in press but not actually published, in November 1818, after the *Biographia*], I have inserted extracts from the *Conciones ad Populum*, printed, though scarcely published, in the year 1795, in the very heat and height of my anti-ministerial enthusiasm: these in proof that my principles of politics have sustained no change.[2]

David Calleo has argued that it was not until 1816–17 that Coleridge's political thought finally assumed its mature form.[3] Certainly, this period marks a resurgence in his interest in matters not only of political current affairs but of socio-political theory more generally. The two most influential book-length works of Coleridge's 1820s – *Aids to Reflection* (1825) and *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830) – are both deeply imbued with the practical considerations of religious belief, and the latter became a hugely influential statement of political theory in the nineteenth century.[4]

Church and State has been very widely discussed, but, although sometimes taken as a core statement of conservative political ideas, its influence was both less party political and wider ranging. As Pamela Edwards puts it, the two salient topics crucial to understanding Coleridge's political writings are, first, his refusal to self-identify as a 'party man' and, second, his classicism.[5] Edwards also argues, persuasively I think, how mistaken it is to read Coleridge's political ideas as only being influential on a 'conservative' political tradition. Certainly, as she says, for much of the nineteenth century Coleridge provoked a 'discipular tradition, relatively uncritical in its admiration for the "Sage of Highgate" '. Edwards notes as evidence that 'the amount and variety of Coleridgeiana and the number and variety of both single and collected editions of Coleridge attest to his popularity among the Victorians', adding that he was taken as providing 'justifications of "Tory" principles'. But the truth was rather more complicated. In fact, he influenced many thinkers,

> even those who did not think of themselves as within the 'Idealist' or 'Tory' traditions. His writings received respect and attention from John Stuart Mill and T H Green not merely as artefacts in the history of ideas but as a vital rethinking of persistent problems.[6]

Edwards is one scholar who takes seriously Coleridge's assertion that his later political principles were not at odds with his earlier ones. Though 'others, including contemporary friends and associates from Robert Southey to Henry Crabb Robinson, have viewed Coleridge's portrait of himself as a lifelong "independent" as disingenuous', she insists that 'careful examination of the

political thought of Coleridge from his earliest writings on politics and religion in 1795 to his last and most coherent work of political thought, "On the Constitution of Church and State on 1830" results in a sense of profound continuity that Edwards identifies as neither Radical nor Tory, but a second school of liberalism'.

The present chapter seeks to discuss this continuity by focusing not on the earlier, radical Coleridge writings, nor on the *Church and State*, but instead on the writings Coleridge produced in the 'hinge' years of 1816–17. This involves me in reading one of Coleridge's most neglected, indeed most reviled, works of prose: *The Statesman's Manual* (December 1816). There are various reasons why this transition period is crucial for gaining a sense of Coleridge's engagement with political debates, and two particular reasons why I ignore the more famous and certainly more influential *Church and State* volume. Those two reasons are classics and class. Though classical references creep into *Church and State*, as they do without exception into everything Coleridge wrote, it is not a work that engages with the classical heritage in any specific detail – unsurprisingly, since it was occasioned by the debates concerning the emancipation of Roman Catholics in the UK, and what that might mean for the 'idea' of the nation. For the same reason, it has little to say about class; it is more concerned with sect.

Coleridge was not incognizant of 'class', of course. If anything, the situation was, rather, that he had a too firm a sense of what class signified in British polity and society. In 1816 he planned three 'lay sermons' (of which only two were completed), designed to be read by – according to the conceit of the volumes, to be 'preached at' – upper-, middle- and working-class readerships, respectively. The last is the one Coleridge never got around to writing. As R. J. White notes, it would have been fascinating to see how far he was prepared to compromise his notoriously ornate and complexly allusive prose so as to make his third *Lay Sermon* accessible to a proletarian readership.[7] My purpose here is to explore the role played by one aspect of Coleridge's multifarious classical learning in his developing political writing, with particular attention to what this tells us about class. I want to look in particular at Heraclitus in Coleridge's *The Statesman's Manual* – the first serious treatment of Heraclitus in English literature – and its relationship with Coleridge's larger political ideas. This necessarily involves picking a tricky path through Coleridge's complex interrogation of 'the classics' as imaginatively animating tradition, on the one hand, and the dead hand of the past, on the other. The essence of Coleridge's political 'evolution' (or, if you prefer, 'apostasy'), it seems to me, lies in his sense that things must change and also that

things must remain the same. Injustice provokes the urge to make changes; the upheavals of war and revolution provoke the urge to restore order.

There is a problem right away, however. Nobody really takes the *Lay Sermons* seriously. They were written to argue the case that the Bible should guide all aspects of social and political life. This is, to put it mildly, a deeply unfashionable political philosophy. But, while pegging Coleridge as right wing *because* he thought religion and politics were inextricable will distort the true picture, it makes it harder to argue the case for the classics as being at the heart of his world view. The classics of ancient Greece and Rome are, necessarily, pagan classics. There is a class element to this at the level of mere engagement. In the preface to their *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?* Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison suggest that the essay collection's titular political 'turn' raises questions that 'are historical and philosophical as well as artistic and political'. The sense in which the classics 'have become better known among less privileged groups' both through education and through 'social institutions and entertainment' is balanced by the sense in which a parallel cultural tradition has invoked 'the classics' precisely as markers of elite exclusion – or more: 'Greek and Roman texts, ideas and images have been exploited to justify tyranny and atrocity.'[8] This is a crucial question for Romanticism more generally, and for Coleridge in particular. We might expect a passion for the classics to correlate with conservative political affiliations, since a full engagement with this material required the sort of expensive public school education in ancient Greek and Latin that only the aristocracy could afford. Yet classicists like Byron, Shelley and Keats supported (in varying ways) revolution. At the same time, the Romantic movement saw a more 'politically conservative' interest in specifically northern European myth, contradistinguished from the classics.

Marilyn Butler makes this point in her discussion of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (the writing of which overlapped with the composition of the *Lay Sermons*). The charge is commonly laid by critics that, though enormously influential on the development of 'literary criticism' as a discipline, the *Biographia* is 'shapeless' and sprawling. Butler, on the contrary, argues that 'the book's ideology is [its] unifying factor':

> Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was a book deliberately written for an hour of peril. Never since 1798, when the original [*Lyrical*] *Ballads* had appeared, had revolution seemed as real a danger in England as it did in 1817. The danger would come from below, from rioters, machine-breakers, the

> unemployed or underpaid and hungry work-people. But it was fomented, or so the propertied classes felt, by some educated men. The journalist William Cobbett, who addressed himself in cheap newspapers direct to the populace, was the focus of special anger and fear, as a traitor to his order. Coleridge's *Biographia* is addressed to that order, the intellectual élite, for the purpose of urging it to fulfil its social responsibility.[9]

Butler goes on to explore the link between, on the one hand, the abstruse Germanic philosophizing of the 'metaphysical chapters' of this work ('meaningful', Butler thinks, 'only to a small educated elite'), and, on the other, his critique in the *Biographia*'s second volume of both Wordsworth's 'levelling' poetics and the 'jacobinical' potential of plays like Maturin's *Bertram*. Butler grounds her account by sketching out precisely the ideological division in 1810s/1820s writing between a 'right-wing' reactionary Germanism and a 'left-wing' liberal classical emphasis on the Mediterranean. By way of example, she discusses de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* (1810) – which praises German culture 'as a rallying-point for opposition to Napoleon':

> Europe had two dominant cultural traditions: the classical, Mediterranean inheritance, perfectly expressed in comedy, and culminating in a predominantly French modern classicism; and the Northern or Germanic alternative.
>
> The German races did not organize themselves into large states. Man was isolated in very small communities, effectively on his own and dwarfed among the vast, oppressive, unmastered phenomena of Nature. He was obliged to look inward for inspiration, or upward to the mountains, or to God. The literature of the north accordingly became introspective, pessimistic and essentially religious. Its religion was not social but individual, an intense unfulfilled aspiration which was perfectly expressed in Gothic architecture, or in the passionate irregularity of Shakespearian tragedy. The northern or Romantic tradition (which, as Madame de Staël makes plain, is the unified culture of the Germans and the English, Napoleon's leading enemies) has become the most vital and imaginative intellectual force of the present day.[10]

Butler aligns Coleridge with this perspective, and notes the lack in England of any other ideological perspective ('no disinterested exegesis of contemporary German literature or philosophy – nothing that separated [it] out . . . from the now triumphant cause of the extreme Right') by way of explaining why younger, liberal or radical writers like Byron, Shelley and Keats gravitated so

enthusiastically towards classical Greek and Roman literature. But Coleridge sits very uneasily in this division. Though certainly conservative and a Germanist, he was also a passionate classicist. Religion for him was much more a social than a personal matter – as *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830) makes clear. And, though capable of gloomy Gothic pessimism in his writing, he was strongly drawn to comedy. The *Biographia*, whatever else it is, remains a consistently, and sometimes hilariously, funny book.

These, then, are the terms of debate for the political debate in Coleridge's later political writings, and they are familiar enough from other political contexts – order versus freedom, the pay-off between individual liberty and collective strength.

The Statesman's Manual and *A Lay Sermon* were written, rapidly, at the moment of the last and greatest change in Coleridge's life. This personal change coincided with a great shift in European political and social life attendant on the end of decades of Napoleonic war in 1815. The years that followed were marked, across the Continent, by economic hardship, social collapse and unrest. Coleridge's personal life, however, improved. Though the early century had seen a miserable Coleridge living a peripatetic life abroad and in England, haunted by money problems, in ill health, his life increasingly disordered by his opium addiction, April 1816 ushered in a more settled and happier period. This is when Coleridge moved into the house of London physician Dr James Gillman, under whose care, and in the company of whose family, he lived out the rest of his life – eighteen calmer and more regular years writing and publishing as the 'sage of Highgate'. The move marked more than a personal climacteric: it was a writerly one too. In the 1790s and 1800s Coleridge had (of course) composed all his great poetry, and undertaken ambitious but fundamentally scattered projects in prose, such as the ten-part polemical *The Watchman* (1 March to 13 May 1796) – perhaps the most politically radical of all Coleridge's early works – or single-handedly composing a regular journal (*The Friend*, supposedly a weekly magazine, in fact appearing at irregular intervals between 1809 and 1810). This latter was certainly not apolitical – it was reissued in three volumes in 1818 with the subtitle 'to aid in the formation of fixed principles in politics, morals and religion' – but it did largely avoid commentating on current political events. *The Watchman* had done that, and in its final number Coleridge had declared 'Henceforward I shall cease to cry the State of the political Atmosphere.' His immensely popular public lectures were all on literary topics, and when he started writing his first what we would nowadays call 'stand-alone' book in

mid-1815 – the *Biographia Literaria* – he concentrated on 'practical criticism' of Wordsworth's poetry and contemporary drama.

In September 1815 Coleridge sent the manuscript of the *Biographia* to his Bristol publisher to be set up in type. It was not actually published, however, until July 1817, and then it was issued by a different, London-based press, Coleridge having quarrelled with his original company. In that period the *Biographia* was expanded by the addition of a great deal of new text, much of it explicitly political in nature.[11] While he was revising and expanding the original MS *Biographia* prior to publication, Coleridge also wrote the verse-drama *Zapolyta* (published November 1817), which is much concerned with questions of good governance and proper political authority. He wrote two of his planned three 'Lay Sermons' – *The Statesman's Manual; or The Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight, addressed to the Higher Classes of Society* was published December 1816, and the second, *A Lay Sermon Addressed to the Higher and Middle Classes on the Existing Distresses and Discontents*, emerged in March 1817. When the revised *Biographia* finally appeared in July it was a much more explicitly political work than the original 1815 draft had been.

Neither contemporaries nor posterity have been kind to the *Lay Sermons*. One of Coleridge's friends, Charles Lamb, wrote to Wordsworth in 1816 – almost certainly without having reading the actual works, and merely assuming (incorrectly, in fact) that they advocated political quietism – that Coleridge

> has produced a prodigious mass of composition for a sermon to the middling ranks of people to persuade them they are not so distressed as is commonly supposed. Methinks he should recite it to a congregation of Bilston colliers, – the fate of Cinna the poet would instantaneously be his.[12]

The Bilston colliers were starving working men from Staffordshire who protested their condition by yoking themselves, like beasts of burden, to wagons loaded with coal and dragged them to London to present a petition to the Prince Regent. *The Times* of the day reported the protest:

> The men proceeded at the rate of about twelve miles a day, and receive voluntary gifts of money, &. on the road as they pass along, declining of themselves to ask alms: their motto, as placarded on the carts, being – 'Rather work than beg.'[13]

Cinna the poet was, according to Plutarch, and more famously according to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Act 3 scene 2, torn to pieces by the plebeian mob during Caesar's funeral, because he happened to share the same cognomen as

another Cinna, one of the conspirators. The classical allusion is interesting, not least in its buried assumptions. Lamb thinks Coleridge a foolish poet caught up in violent working-class politics (although, in fact, Coleridge spent much of the 1790s preaching religion and politics through working-class communities up and down the country). There is also the assumption that any working-class protest must tend towards mob violence – in fact, the Bilston colliers were perfectly peaceful: *The Times* conceded that their approach to London 'excited alarm', but added 'but as it proved without cause, as the men demeaned themselves with the utmost propriety'. In a sense what is most interesting is that Coleridge himself anticipated Lamb's objection: for, in a slightly oblique manner, he did present the sermon to the Bilston colliers.

As Robert Keith Lapp notes, the advertisement announcing the imminent publication of *The Statesman's Manual* promised that its 'Profits' were to be 'given to the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor'. As Lapp points out, the Prince Regent's response to the colliers' protest (an 'act of symbolic condescension') was to send 'his brother, the duke of York, to the City of London Tavern, where he was to preside over a meeting of the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor – the very association named in Coleridge's advertisement'.[14]

Still, contemporary reaction to the *Lay Sermons* was wholly negative, dominated by three hostile reviews (in the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Examiner*, all written by Hazlitt and so swingeing that Coleridge added a late passage to the in-press *Biographia* deploring them). There was a good deal of private puzzlement. 'Have you seen Coleridge's "Bible the Statesman's best Manual"?' Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to a friend. 'I think it is ten times more obscure than the darkest parts of the *Friend*.'[15] The copy Coleridge sent to his friend Robert Southey was sold after the latter's death (along with the rest of his library) with its pages still uncut. Contemporary reaction to the *Biographia* was similarly hostile, or puzzled. The difference is that this work was recuperated, such that by the beginning of the next century it had become, in effect, the foundational text for the new discipline of 'University English'. Nothing like that happened with the *Lay Sermons*. Here is Richard Holmes' late-twentieth-century account:

> The Gillmans watched anxiously as he worked from nine til five and then began to sit up all night, 'writing and erasing'. He demanded more opium and made scenes. Finally he dictated a chaotic text to Morgan, 'not able even to look over the copy' before he sent it off. *The Statesman's Manual* (as he now nervously renamed it), emerged as the most obscure and disorganised short

> work that Coleridge ever published … rambling … [a] mixture of metaphysics and sentimental pieties.[16]

Since I (you will be unsurprised to learn) hope to reclaim the importance of these much-abused volumes, I will need to start by exploring the grounds for this hostility. The issue, I think (contra Holmes' rather tendentious implication), is not that they were written in a muddle of opium. Or, to put it another way, it is true, of course, that they *were* written under the influence of opium; but then so were all the works Coleridge wrote in the 1810s and 1820s, and most of these are accounted masterpieces.

There are two main 'problems' with *The Statesman's Manual*. The first is right there, in the subtitle. The only people who believe today that 'the Bible is the best guide to political skill and foresight' are the hard-right 'evangelical' wing of the US Republican and UK Tory parties. I do not mean to be cheaply dismissive. Speaking more generally, there is much to be said for the complex, mutually enriching and occasionally mutually degrading interrelationship between people's religious and their political beliefs without needing to stray into the straitjacket literalism of arguing – as Coleridge does here – that the French Revolution and Napoleon's retreat from Moscow were prophetically described in the Book of Isaiah. R. J. White suggests that 'the patient study of Coleridge on allegory and symbol, on the sense in which scriptural history is history, and whence it derives its prophetic power' might put the reader in a more sympathetic place with respect to this daft stuff.[17] But he also quotes Walter Pater's 1895 observation that too often Coleridge 'allows the impress of a somewhat inferior theological literature' in his prose writings. Quite. We can hardly help feeling that there is something unhealthily monomaniacal in the mind that reads the Bible to discover references to contemporary current affairs – or insists that we must 'elevate even our daily newspapers and political journals into COMMENTS ON THE BIBLE'.[18] It is too rigid a world view.

But the second 'problem' in the book is exactly the opposite – that it is too fluid, a too disorganized, obscure and confusing piece of writing. As anybody who has actually sat down and read the book will confirm, it is hard to keep the cogent progression of paragraphs and developing argument in mind, and individual passages can provoke head-scratching. We might, as Richard Holmes does above, attribute this to a fundamental confusion in Coleridge's opium-addled mind at the time of writing. Or we might, as Henry Crabb Robinson did in 1817, try to see in it something more suggestive. 'What he has to say', Robinson declared, with what sounds like more hope than surety, 'cannot be rendered

intelligible in merely popular language … under such circumstances the temptation is scarcely to be resisted, of endeavouring to blend in one mass heterogeneous materials and adorn the abstractions of a scholastic system by a popular rhetorick.'[19] Towards the end of the book Coleridge himself seems to concede the point. 'In reviewing the foregoing pages, I am apprehensive', he confesses, 'that they may be thought to resemble the overflow of an earnest mind rather than an orderly premeditated composition.'[20]

Which is it, then? Does Coleridge's political analysis here suffer from too strict and procrustean a 'conservative' hyper-order? Or does it suffer from too destabilizing and 'radical' an overflow? Perhaps the mistake is to read it on the level of content only. One of the things that make the *Lay Sermons* so extraordinary, and which informs their continuing relevance as political meditations, is the way they seek to embody their political philosophy, and their understanding of class, *formally* rather than ideationally. Both these short books manifest in themselves the tension between too rigid an order and a liberating looseness, or, if you prefer (and it is part of the complexity of Coleridge's argument that this second dyad cannot be separated out from the first), a necessary social harmony and a divisive and violent social instability.

The plan of three sermons explicitly connects this with the traditional categories of social class, in a way that also connects with Arnold's later, Coleridge-influenced, distinction between 'Hebrew' and 'Hellene'. The distinction, of course, is: a social philosophy founded on order and restraint – and their cognates, oppression and tyranny – as against a social philosophy of life-joy and freedom, and *their* cognates, anarchy and chaos.[21] We might expect, in a text in which the subtitle declares 'the Bible the best guide to political skill and foresight', to find the Hebraic valorized. But it is a *classical* contrast, between Rome and Greece, and more specifically between Horace and Heraclitus, that animates Coleridge's core thesis. The volume's epigraph is selected from the Psalms of David, and Coleridge's opening sentence is:

> If our whole knowledge and information concerning the Bible had been confined to the one fact of its immediate derivation from God, we should still presume that it contained rules and assistances for all conditions of men under all circumstances; and therefore for communities no less than for individuals.

The whole book is threaded with quotation from the Bible, particularly from the Old Testament (Isaiah especially), together with a few sterner passages from that rarely un-stern authority, Milton. The former of these explicitly

valorizes what Coleridge calls the 'Jewish prophets' over the merits of classical paganism:

> As men divinely taught and better teaching
> The solid rules of civil government
> In their majestic unaffected style,
> Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
>
> *Paradise Regained* iv. 354

This stress on 'the acts and constitutions of God, whose law executeth itself, and whose Word is the foundation, the power, and the life of the universe' would seem to have little place for classical paganism.[22] Indeed, when examples from the classical world are invoked it is often to stress the dangers of societal collapse, the violence of revolution: 'the examples of former Jacobins, as Julius Caesar, Cromwell, and the like . . . the revolutions of Corcyra [in 427 BC], the proscriptions of the Reformers, Marius, Caesar, &c. and [their] direful effects'.[23]

This has a kind of rather single-minded logic to it. If the Bible is the best guide to political skill and foresight, we must expect societies that have not had the advantage of this book, and its religion, to be failures. The point is reiterated several times: 'we are compelled to admit, as a fact of history, that the Bible has been the main lever by which the moral and intellectual character of Europe has been raised to its present comparative height'.[24] Comparative to what? To pagan antecedents and the rest of the un-Christian world, we assume. The Bible is superior to 'all the books of Greek philosophy' because it affirms a God, 'and not a God only, but the living God'.[25] The Pythagorean αὐτός ἔφη ('he himself said it!') is Christianized by Coleridge: 'Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΦΗ. IPSE DIXIT!'[26] – the [Johannine] *Logos* has said it. The work closes with a peroration on 'science' (the Bible alone contains a Science of *Realities*') in which the Archimedean 'EUREKA' (Coleridge mistakenly attributes this to Pythagoras) can only be made 'comprehensible' in the 'gleam of our own inward experience' via 'the 'hidden treasures of the Law and the Prophets'.[27] But there is a key exception to Hebraic conceptual dominance in the work: Heraclitus. Just the fact of Heraclitus being used to make serious and far-reaching political points is remarkable. It is in the *Lay Sermons* that we find the first iteration, anywhere in the world, of what we might call 'the modern Heraclitus', the Heraclitus who became so important a figure a hundred years later in the writings of Modernists like T. S. Eliot and Heidegger.

Prior to this, when Heraclitus was mentioned it was to stress his supposed gloominess – to invoke him, indeed, as a sort of personification of pessimism

itself. Matthew Prior in 1718, after two years in prison, summoned him: 'Sad Heraclitus, serious wretch, return/In louder grief our greater crimes to mourn' (although he does so to distance himself from such unalloyed misery: 'I unconcerned stand by').[28] The conventional contrast was between laughing Democritus and sad Heraclitus. Henry Kirke White (1785–1806) addressed himself in the 1790s in 'My Own Character' as 'a chaos of all contradiction':

> Democritus now, and anon Heraclitus
> Now laughing and pleas'd like a child with a rattle;
> Then vex'd to the soul with impertinent tattle.[29]

Though Heraclitan gloom was not always assumed to be 'impertinent', it *was* generally taken as a type of fixed or unreachable grief. Of the Biblical Solomon, Walter Bradick noted in 1765 that 'this great Connoisseur of human nature would not have us to be always laughing with Democritus, nor always weeping, with Heraclitus'.[30] Thomas Flatman's 1681 work signals its paradoxically ludicrous tone from its title: *Heraclitus Ridens*. As to the actual content of Heraclitus' philosophy, the eighteenth century was uninterested. Johann Jakob Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiae* (1742–4) laments that this thought 'has been almost entirely overlooked by the moderns', despite the fact that it 'obtained among the antients no small share of celebrity'.[31]

Coleridge takes Heraclitus seriously, even joyfully. He first cites the Greek to bolster his argument that, lacking the Divine and Biblical prompting, 'the human understanding musing on many things snatches at truth, but is frustrated and disheartened by the fluctuating nature of its objects'. Unlike other classical sources mentioned in *The Statesman's Manual*, Heraclitus is quoted at length, and with respect:

> Its conclusions therefore are timid and uncertain, and it hath no way of giving permanence to things but by reducing them to abstractions. Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but all certain knowledge is in the power of God, and a presence from above.[32]

The latter sentence is taken from the *Wisdom of Solomon*; and in a pedantic footnote Coleridge inserts a quotation:

> Ποταμῷ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι δὶς ἐμβῆναι τῷ αὐτῷ καθ' Ἡράκλειτον οὐτὲ θνητῆς οὐσίας δὶς ἅψασθαι κατὰ ἕξιν ἀλλα ὀξύτητι καὶ τάχει τῆς μεταβολῆς σκίδνησι καὶ πάλιν συνάγει, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ πάλιν οὐδὲ ὕστερον ἀλλ' ἅμα συνίσταται

> καὶ ἀπολείπει καὶ 'πρόσεισι καὶ ἄπεισι, ὅθεν οὐδ' εἰς τὸ εἶναι περαίνει τὸ γιγνόμενον αὐτῆς τῷ μηδέποτε λήγειν μηδ' ἡττασθαι τὴν γένεσιν. PLUTARCH.[33]

This is surely the most famous of Heraclitus' many and occasionally opaque fragments. We cannot step into the same river twice: the process of generation itself is unceasing and ineluctable.

We might take it that Coleridge's implication here is something along the lines of: the Hebrew God gives order, structure and law; and without the Bible the best a philosopher can do is speak gloomily of a cosmos of endless fluidity and impermanence. This, however, would distort the thesis being advanced. The book's argument certainly does not divide neatly between a valorization of Hebraism and a dismissal of Hellenism. Even St Paul, Coleridge notes, drew on the classics.[34] Divine Providence can work its way through in many forms; and at the exact midpoint of *The Statesman's Manual* Coleridge quotes two classical sources, 'two great men, both pagans; but removed from each other by many centuries, and not more distant in their ages than in their characters and situations'.[35] One is the 'darling of the polished court', Horace, five lines from whose *Satires* (2:6, 71–4) are quoted to the effect that the 'summum bonum', rather than 'conversations in country seats', ought to guide political decisions. The other is 'Heraclitus, the sad and recluse philosopher', quoted first in Greek, and then in Coleridge's own translation:

> Multiscience (or a variety and quantity of acquired knowledge) does not equal intelligence. But the Sibyll with wild enthusiasm mouth shrilling forth unmirthful, inornate and unperfumed truths reaches to a thousand years with her voice through the power of God.[36]

Later (probably in the 1820s), Coleridge versified this as:

> – Not hers
> To win the sense by words of rhetoric,
> Lip-blossoms breathing perishable sweets;
> But by the power of the informing Word
> Roll sounding onward through a thousand years
> Her deep prophetic bodements.[37]

This imports λογος, the 'informing Word', into the original – though a crucial Heraclitan concept, it is not actually in the Greek of this fragment. In *The*

Statesman's Manual, Coleridge follows the Heraclitus quotation with 'Shall we hesitate to apply to the prophets of God, what could be affirmed of the Sibyls by a philosopher whom Socrates, the prince of philosophers, venerated for the profundity of his wisdom?'

Heraclitus is quoted again in one of the appendices to *The Statesman's Manual*. Here Coleridge takes a different tack, first mocking with sarcastic parody those who would dismiss all classical philosophy:

> Greeks indeed were a fine people in works of *taste*; but as to their philosophers – the writings of Plato are smoke and flash from the witch's cauldron of a disturbed imagination: – Aristotle's works a quickset hedge of fruitless and thorny distinctions; and all the philosophers before Plato and Aristotle fablers and allegorizers![38]

Coleridge wants to distance himself from this position:

> The eldest and most profound of the Greek philosophers demanded assent to their doctrine, mainly as σοφία θεοπαρδοτος that is, a traditionary wisdom that had its origin in inspiration; that these men referred the same power to the πῦρ ἀείζωον ὑπὸ διοικοῦντος ΛΟΓΟΥ; and that they were scarcely less express . . . in their affirmations of the Logos, as no mere attribute or quality, no mode of abstraction, no personification, but literally and mysteriously Deus alter et idem.

Coleridge then expatiates for a lengthy paragraph on the Gospel of Saint John, the *Logos* of whom played so central a role in Coleridge's own life and thought:

> The very same truth is found in a fragment of the Ephesian Heraclitus, preserved by Stobaeus, and in somewhat different words by Diogenes Laertius: Ξὺν νόῳ λέγοντας ἰσχυρίζεσθαι χρὴ τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων· τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπινοι νόοι ὑπὸ ἑνὸς τοῦ θείου [Λογου·] κρατεῖ γὰρ τοσοῦτον ὁκόσον ἐθέλει, καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ πᾶσὶ καὶ περιγίνεται. TRANSLATION – To discourse rationally (if we would render the discursive understanding *discourse of reason*) it behoves us to derive strength from that which is common to all men: (= the light that lighteth every man.) For all human understandings are nourished by the one Divine Word, whose power is commensurate with his will, and is sufficient for all and overfloweth, (shineth in darkness, and is not contained therein, or comprehended by the darkness.)

Again Coleridge has imported λογος into the text – it is not in the original fragment.[39] He goes on:

> This was Heraclitus, whose book is nearly six hundred years older than the Gospel of St. John, and who was proverbially entitled the Dark (ὁ σκοτεινός). But it was a darkness which Socrates would not condemn, and which would probably appear to enlightened Christians the darkness of prophecy, had the work, which he hid in the temple, been preserved to us.

What are these two classical points of reference doing in a work that otherwise repudiates paganism for the ethical and spiritual solidity of the Bible? Horace, we may suppose, is there because such quotation, as Kenneth Haynes notes in a different context, is liable to 'draw on Horace's reputation for moral wisdom, as a judicious enjoyer of life's goods'.[40] Heraclitus is a different matter. He embodies, on the one hand, a kind of dark, joyless, pre-Christian 'flow'. Πάντα ῥεῖ καὶ οὐδέν μένειν ('everything flows; nothing remains the same') may not be found in precisely this form in Heraclitus' remaining fragments, but it encapsulates the most widely known aspect of his philosophical beliefs.[41] On the other hand, he is the first great philosopher of the *logos*, a much-debated principle of 'order' or 'organization' concerning the precise valence of which scholars remain unable to agree.[42] *Logos* is also the Greek term translated in the King James Bible as 'word' in the opening to John's gospel ('In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God … And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us', John 1:1–14).

Modern scholarship agrees that Heraclitus means something quite different by *logos* than does the author of the Gospel of John, and that there is no plausible line of influence connecting the two uses.[43] But this is not how Coleridge saw matters. He spent much of his later life working on a vast 'Magnum Opus', designed to synthesize and summarize his entire theological philosophy. He contemplated several titles for this work (the 'Logosophia', the 'Opus Maximum') – and one of those titles was *Heraclitus redivivius*. In the introduction to his edition of the fragments that compose all we have of it, Thomas McFarland notes 'how well … logos served the deepest purposes of the magnum opus':

> Logos … in short, in melding to the idea of rational structure the reality of the person, fused the deepest and most habitual concerns of Coleridge.[44]

For Coleridge, as for Heidegger a century later, it was not that he believed the *logos* of Heraclitus directly influenced St John; it was that both writers connected through it with something core to being itself. 'For Heidegger Logos is important in Heraclitus not because it anticipates Christianity, but because it penetrates to the essential nature of being. Instead of "logic" in the modern sense, Heidegger

contends, Logos actually carries the significance of "gathering together"'. Such an emphasis, McFarland rightly stresses, is wholly congenial to 'Coleridge's harmonizing and reconciling temperament'. We might add: it is precisely this communitarian sense of the word that informs his work as a social and political thinker.

Coleridge quotes Heraclitus and Horace as his two sole classical points of reference (in an otherwise wholly Hebraic, Biblical text) for reasons that are both original to him, and yet – despite the relative obscurity of the *Lay Sermons* – remarkably forward looking. The argument, as is often the case with Coleridge, is oblique rather than straightforward. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Coleridge tacitly anticipates the distinction Heidegger draws by way of defining 'the political': in his 'Parmenides lectures' of 1942–3 he says:

> The political, which as πολιτικόν arose formerly out of the essence of the Greek πόλις, has come to be understood in the Roman way. Since the time of the *imperium*, the Greek word 'political' has meant something Roman. What is Greek about it is only its sound.[45]

Heidegger develops his argument with opposing etymological definitions of 'truth'. On the one hand is the Greek *alētheia*, which he derives from a notional privative 'a-lētheia', an 'unconcealment' (truth not as 'correspondence and correctness' but, rather, as a revelatory encounter with the lost and forgotten). This Heidegger contrasts with the Roman *veritas*, which means 'correspondence of matter to knowledge'. It is tempting to consider how proto-Heideggerian much of Coleridge's political and social thinking is, not least because doing so provides one way of bringing the early 'radical' Coleridge and the later 'conservative' Coleridge into some manner of conceptual alignment.

This brings me, at last, back to the subject of class. The *logos* as Coleridge conceives it is both religious and secular – a divine context for the whole of creation, and also a practical 'coming together' mediated by communication, speech, writing and art. It is, in other words, both 'individual' and 'social'. The infelicitous reception history of *The Statesman's Manual* has tended to obscure how radical a conceptual gesture it was of Coleridge to bring Heraclitus into the debate in this way. This has a number of important consequences for how we read later Coleridge, which shortness of space unfortunately prevents me from elaborating. Part of the difficulty is the very complexity and involution of Coleridge's ideas – closer to the density of Heidegger than the simpler dyad of Nietzsche's 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' principles. Like Nietzsche's famous pair, Coleridge is finding a way of talking about the dynamic of 'social order' and

'social energy'. The point where liberty becomes licence, freedom anarchy or (conversely) order tyranny is articulated by the distinction between a Hebraic strictness and a Hellenic flow, and is dynamic not only between but within the two forms.

This reverts back upon the odder portions of the book. Take Coleridge's interpretation of the Book of Isaiah as prophesying the Napoleonic Wars. The focus here is less on the specifics, and more on what he later identifies as 'the two poles or Plus and Minus states' of Biblical interpretation. The first is epitomized by the 'comment on some high and doctrinal text introduced with the words It only means so and so!'[46] The latter is to abdicate all 'strictness' and precision from such reading: to say 'it is a mystery: and we are bound to believe the words without presuming to enquire into the meaning of them'.[47] Heraclitus, here, stands for the obscure 'mystic' darkness for which he was also a byword – but also for the illuminating proto-Christian eloquence of 'the word' which animates a class system that would otherwise be an arthritic and rigid social systematization. If he feels he does not have to spell this out in *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), it may be because the book was specifically aimed at 'the upper classes'. The unwritten third volume would, it can be argued, have developed this idea in a less obliquely patrician manner – that class itself is *logos*, a mode of 'logic' in the (bad, Heideggerian) sense that Western society has derived from the Greek λογος, while also being a free expression of societal difference, a process of 'congregation' as much divinely as mundanely determined.

We recall that Coleridge was writing when the Bilston colliers' deliberate, parodic adoption of the role of 'beasts' was filling news reports, and in part to address such 'discontents'. In the light of this, his specific Biblical interpretation may look less like narrow-minded Biblical literalism, and much more like a poetical apprehension of the way the symbolism of class informs practical politics. He provides a reading of the 'sixth trumpet in the Apocalypse', scrupulous (he insists) not to be 'seduced by the wonderful (*apparent*) aptness of the symbols', as a fabulous realization of 'a seditious and riotous multitude', with 'their Heads of Leaders', and themselves reduced to the status of 'thousands of pack-horses'. But in his reading it is not the Bilston-collier-like 'horses' who are the real beasts: it is the Heads 'resembling those of a roaring wild beast, with smoke, fire and brimstone (that is, empty, unintelligible, incendiary, calumnious and offensively foul language) issuing from their mouths'.[48] This is to read both the rhetorical effectiveness of the Bilston colliers' protest, and the Bible as well, as informed by an animating *logos*.

The main thesis of Coleridge's *On the Constitution of Church and State* (1830) is that actual politics, and the harmonious interrelation of the classes, depends upon the 'idea' each has of their polity. Although this influential late work is sometimes glossed as a work of political Platonism, Coleridge does not really mean 'idea' in the way Plato talks about them. On the contrary, as the work anticipates the coming (as it was written) and then actual (as it was published) legal emancipation of British Catholics, it reflects the sense that the 'idea' of the state grows and develops. What that idea is, in fact, is a *logos* – in the Heraclitan rather than the more theologically elevated Johannine sense.

Yet the *Church and State* book became one of the most influential books of British nineteenth-century political discourse, while *The Statesman's Manual* was almost wholly ignored. Why? Heraclitus might, again, explain the difference. *Church and State* mentions the Greek philosopher once, in passing (he is pegged as a 'mystic'); and, although Coleridge's discussion of the 'idea' of the state in that work is more complex than is often thought, it is always related to questions of practical social and political engagement. *The Statesman's Manual* is, if anything, more widely framed; but it articulates itself through a theoretical 'metaphysics' of political engagement. As such, it was, if not exactly ahead of its time (for its reputation is still to recover), at least out of alignment with what was happening in political debate. As Richard Hole has demonstrated, from about 1760 to the 1830s there was 'a general movement away from the theoretical toward the empirical' in political discussion: the 'concept of rights was largely abandoned, constitutional reforms came for reasons of political expediency, social reforms for utilitarian or humanitarian ones'.[49] There was, moreover, a 'movement away from theological concept of political and social obligation to a utilitarian one. Many men gradually ceased to believe that they had a duty to submit to government and the social order because God willed it, and instead based their allegiance on their own human perception of the usefulness of that government and society.' Heraclitus is for Coleridge, *inter alia*, a way of broadening out his appeal to a *logos*-based theory of social function and justice from the Biblical sanction of St John.

4

Swinish Classics; or a Conservative Clash with Cockney Culture

Henry Stead

On 1 November 1790 Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was published in England. The counter-revolutionary intervention of a Whig politician who had previously championed numerous progressive causes provided an important rallying point for traditionalist thinkers by expressing in plain language their concerns about the social upheaval across the Channel. From the viewpoint of pro-revolutionaries, Burke's *Reflections* gave shape to the conservative forces they were up against; its publication provoked a 'pamphlet war', which included such key radical responses to the *Reflections* as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* (1790) and Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791).[1] In Burke's treatise he expressed a concern for the fate of French civilization and its culture, and in so doing coined a term that would haunt his counter-revolutionary campaign. Capping his deliberation about what would happen to French civilization following the overthrow of its nobility and clergy, which he viewed as the twin guardians of European culture, he wrote: 'learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude'.

This chapter asks what part the Greek and Roman classics played in the cultural war between British reformists and conservatives in the periodical press of the late 1810s and early 1820s. The ideological struggle – as we shall see – over the 'correct' use and 'ownership' of classical culture had its very real, *material* counterpart in the intense fight over the social and political rights (and, therefore, living and working conditions) of the British underclasses. The chapter focuses specifically on the conservative critical assaults upon those predominantly professional writers, artists and thinkers associated with the 'Cockney School', who clustered around the reformist poet, journalist and 'King of Cockaigne', Leigh Hunt (1784–1859). The group had its own high-circulation

Sunday journal in *The Examiner* (founded in 1808), which printed and promoted the work of its circle, disseminating their reformist ideology to the steadily growing reading public. The assaults – under consideration here – made on Hunt and his friends were conducted chiefly by the notorious team of reviewers writing under the pseudonym of 'Z' for the Scottish Tory monthly, the *Blackwood's Magazine* (founded in 1817), including John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854), John Wilson Croker (1780–1857) and William Maginn (1794–1842).[2] Since these attacks were part of a public dialogue, wherever possible I shall address both the provocation and the counter-attack, in each case exploring the vying appropriations of classical culture.

In his *Reflections* Edmund Burke was writing about France, and his swine were therefore French swine, but it was all too clear that his anxieties about the shifts in world order (now that the stabilizing forces of unquestioning deference to the crown, orthodox religion and the landed gentry were being dismantled) transcended national boundaries and played heavily, too, upon the cultured ease of the British aristocracy. His derogatory characterization of the animalistic masses was by no means limited to France. In the same publication Burke also drew unfavourable parallels between the French Revolutionaries and Catiline, Cethegus and the heaven-storming giants; but these were not the comparisons that caught the imagination of the British public. It was Burke's swine (or their self-appointed British radical representatives) that would steal the day and rally against him, provocatively squealing their way through the 1790s and, as we shall see, well beyond.

Burke's pigs were pressed into service by British radicals, who remorselessly exploited such an ideologically loaded phrase. All of a sudden the expression was everywhere in the radical press, notably in Thomas Spence's revolutionary periodical, *One Penny Worth of Pig's Meat: Lessons for the Swinish Multitude* (1793), Richard 'Citizen' Lee's *The Rights of Swine, an Address to the Poor* (1795) and Daniel Isaac Eaton's *Politics for the People, or Hogs Wash* (1793). An especially potent, but lesser-known, example can be found in the influential fourth edition of Thomas Bridges of Hull's burlesque translation of Homer's *Iliad*, printed by G. G. and J. Robinson of Paternoster Row in 1797.[3] The same booksellers, who were in November 1793 fined for selling copies of Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*, introduced into Bridges' translation – before the first line of the humorously abridged classic – an illustration of a blind Homer among a parcel of pigs (Figure 4.1). The caption reads: 'Homer casting pearls before swine'. This clever hybrid allusion to Burke's polemic via Matthew 7:6 ('Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them

Figure 4.1 'Homer casting pearls before swine.'

under their feet, and turn again and rend you'[4]) exemplifies the carefully balanced and covert industry of radical booksellers, many of whom were committed to communicating dissent at huge personal risk of imprisonment and bankruptcy. Burke may have considered it futile to cast the pearls of learning before the uneducated masses, but Homer (as depicted) was blind to such class distinction, and the act of disseminating a burlesqued *Iliad* became explicitly one of powerful political and social protest.

We find in Shelley's *Oedipus Tyrannus* (1819) a further and much later example of the radical appropriation of Burke's hogs. In listing among the *dramatis personae* of his version of Sophocles' tragedy 'a chorus of the Swinish Multitude', the reformist poet was alluding not so much to Burke's conservative

treatise as to what must have appeared in the post-revolutionary 'gloom' of the 1810s to be the Golden Age of British popular radicalism. In his poem *The Masque of Anarchy* – written, as was *Oedipus*, in the wake of the Peterloo Massacre (1819) – Shelley would memorably call upon the working classes to 'Shake your chains to earth like dew' and remember that 'Ye are many – they are few!'[5] It was natural for post-revolutionary radicals such as Shelley to attempt to reignite the spirit of the 1790s in a moment of renewed crisis. Calls for social reform in Britain (especially in printed media) had, over the previous two decades, been matched by the clamour of patriotism aroused by the identification of a new, and yet time-honoured, foreign enemy, the new French Republic. Critics of the war, such as Leigh Hunt, had to be careful not to appear unpatriotic.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, social reform had become associated with revolution, and revolution with the crude gallows of lamp posts and the thud of the guillotine. It became the principal calling of those reformist writers whom it is now common practice to call either the second-generation Romantics or the 'Cockney School' to rebrand the struggle for social reform.[6] John Keats says as much in a letter to his brother and sister-in-law in 1819:

> [The French Revolution] has had an unlucky termination. It put a stop to the rapid progress of free sentiments in England, and gave our Court hopes of turning back to the despotism of the 16th century. They have made a handle of this event in every way to undermine our freedom. They spread a horrid superstition against all innovation and improvement. The present struggle in England of the people is to destroy this superstition.[7]

One important way the Cockney radical poets attempted to 'destroy this superstition' and rebrand the struggle for reform was to work with ancient Greek and Roman culture – the very foundations of conservative culture – and do with it something radically new. The Cockney classicism of the late 1810s and early 1820s became a site of political contest because their hijacking of conservative elite culture, and their communication of it via popular 'broadcast' channels – that is, the middle-class periodical press – to a burgeoning, educated and newly culturally confident consumer society, was evidence that the aristocratic stronghold of the classical education had been breached.[8] Such a breach reflected the erosion of traditional means of preserving social order by class distinction as much as the rise of consumerism as a power to rival the ownership of land, international trade and big industry. In the press the old battle lines from the revolutionary 1790s were re-established: while Shelley and his fellow 'Cockneys' were reaching back to the inflammatory language of Spence, Lee and Eaton,

conservative critics reached back to many of the same satirical strategies as those employed by the editors of the influential counter-revolutionary periodical, the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–8), namely George Canning, John Hookham Frere, George Ellis and William Gifford.[9]

Part of the power (and, indeed, appeal) of the invective found in the Tory periodical press of the 1810s – as of the 1790s – was the skilful blend of fact and fiction; a key feature of the attacks was their interweaving of shrewd and detailed observation with cynical flights of smearing fantasy. This technique was beguiling enough not only to have influenced contemporary reception of the highly politicized 'Cockney culture' and – by extension – the progress of that part of the reform movement, but also to continue distorting our retrospective view of the cultural output of those writers and artists who, as we shall see, posed a serious threat to the upholders of the status quo. Lockhart and friends would write with deceptive precision and insight about the Cockneys and their work, and then – in the blink of an eye – fly off into outrageous and comical hyperbole. They simultaneously make astute (albeit openly class-prejudiced) jibes against Leigh Hunt and his circle, and mix them in with entertainingly bizarre and fanciful denunciations of their inhumanity, likening them, for example, to wild animals; or – when humanity *was* granted them – they were painted in the most intricately outlandish caricature. The skilful reactionary critics thus fostered their own credibility while destroying that of their enemies and their progressive cause. A reader is, and was, hard pressed to tell apart the learned truth and the savage fiction.[10]

> I humbly suggest, that you [. . .] conduct yourself, at your court at Lisson Grove, with a stateliness and hauteur that may be considered, by the youthful nobility of Cockaigne, a perfect model of monarchical dignity, but is, in fact, risibly characteristic of your plebeian origin and education.[11]

Reading Z's work is a lesson in how fiction laid on thick enough, repeated and reinforced with strands of realism, may appear as fact. We are therefore landed with the difficult job of disentangling *Blackwood's Magazine*'s forceful 'reality' from that with which a more objective analysis of Hunt-school reform furnishes us.

What the high-profile feuding between Scottish Tory and the London-based left-wing writers reveals is a sustained period (1810s to 1820s), like that of the late 1790s, in which there was a clear perception that poetry, and its critical reception, really could change the world. The stakes have rarely been higher. It was the time of the Spa Field Riots (1816) and the March of the Blanketeers (1817), which provoked Lord Liverpool's government to pass the Seditious

Meetings Act in the same year. While the cavalry were sent by the government to disperse peaceful mass meetings in the open (e.g. 'Peterloo Massacre', Manchester, 1819), the Tory journalists wielded their own sabres in the periodical press. It was not only the printing and distribution of the great political pamphlets that spurred on social reform in Britain, but also the more enigmatic but equally potent expressions of dissent in poetry, whose importance was increased by the authorities' determination to suppress distribution of radical pamphlets.

Classical knowledge and reference to ancient Greek and Roman texts loom large in these cultural wars, not only because these were a key feature of the Cockney style of the late 1810s, but also because a favoured way for Tory critics to ridicule their political opponents was to demonstrate the superiority of their own classical learning. It was something of a Tory critical commonplace to suggest that their political opponents were ignorant of classical culture. This premise, in combination with the overtly classical writings of the Cockneys, made for a classical showdown. Lockhart, Maginn and Croker could each have pulled classical rank over just about anyone – for their knowledge as classicists was not only profound, it was certified too by the top educational institutions of the day.[12] The scene was set for an epic clash between reformist writers and their reactionary foe, both reaching for classical culture as their weapon of choice; but these weapons could scarcely have resembled one another less. Each side poured scorn on the other's notion of the classical: Hunt saw the majority of 'scholars' as 'men who really know nothing of their [classical] authors but the words . . . and pretend it is a wonderous matter'.[13] Lockhart and friends, as we shall see, would repeatedly delight in reminding their readers (misleadingly) that Hunt and his Cockneys knew nothing of ancient Greece because they could not even read Greek.

That the men and women associated with the Cockney School, most of whom had not been to university or – in some cases – the top schools, should profess to commune with the classical poets was portrayed as a hilarious breech of etiquette. As Lockhart at his most provocative would have it, 'a Hottentot in top-boots is not more ridiculous than a classical Cockney'.[14] It is important, however, that we resist buying into the *Blackwood's* homogenization of the socio-economically diverse 'school', which ranged from the lower middle classes (e.g. Keats and Hazlitt) to the landed gentry (both Shelley and Byron were intimates of Hunt and linked closely by the Tory press to the Cockney School).[15] One of the most impressive achievements of the group was the example they set of people putting their differences aside, defeating their class prejudices and clubbing together in their struggle for the common goal of social reform. Jeffrey Cox rightly points out that 'the attempt by *Blackwood's* to reduce the complexities of the group's

social status to a single class category . . . is a sign of their [the Cockneys'] success in forging a group solidarity beyond originary class positions.'[16] It is a persistent misconception, for example, that Keats was raised in poverty and poorly educated, knowing scarcely any Latin and no Greek. The grain of truth, around which the other accretions have gathered, is that Keats knew precious little Greek. The rest is based on a highly selective presentation of the facts, carelessly dismissive of any education (formal or informal) outside the leading public schools and Oxbridge, and apparently blind to degrees of social and economic status between crow-scarer and monarch of the realm. Both Keats and Hunt were, broadly speaking, middle-class and well-educated men; neither went to university, nor, in consequence, did they ever profess to be scholars, in spite of their obsessive study of the poetry and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Hunt wrote in his preface to *Foliage* (1818): 'I pretend to be no great scholar myself; but what I do read, I read closely and with a due sense of what the poet demands.'[17]

As I have pointed out elsewhere, Keats's Latinity has been severely underestimated, and Hunt could have boasted that he was a 'deputy Grecian' at Christ's Hospital, a school with the famously irascible headmaster and learned classicist, the Rev. James Bowyer. Although still only a schoolboy accolade, being a 'deputy Grecian' meant that Hunt left school having read a quantity of Roman literary texts (from Republican to post-classical Latin) that would rival, if not surpass, most Classics graduates today. It also, of course, meant that he had advanced to the study of ancient Greek literature, including everything deemed worthwhile by the rigorous Bowyer, excepting the Greek tragedies, which were reserved for the full 'Grecians', or final-year classical scholars at Christ's Hospital.[18]

The universe according to *Blackwood's* was one of stark contrasts. This resulted, especially in the literary criticism of the likes of Lockhart, in the fictional creation of a Britain made up of a population repelled to political and social extremes: at one end were the polite and educated gentry – *alias* the sensible Tories – and at the other the vulgar mob, identified politically with the 'radical' Whiggish left. Such a polarization of class division is, of course, absurdly reductive, as well as anachronistic. The Tory critics who wrote the counter-Cockney reviews appear to uphold an outmoded, quasi-feudal society. Their 'peasantry', or simply those who are not 'us' (i.e. respectable Tory *Blackwood's* readers – largely referring to the aspirant middle classes and the professional and commercial *nouveaux riches*),[19] was the threatening 'other'. This 'peasant population' consisted largely of the educated, economically secure and increasingly culturally confident middle

classes, who, alongside the upper-class radicals and many of the newly and increasingly literate working classes, were calling for social reform. *Blackwood's* flattered its readers by casting them as the defenders of aristocratic values, high culture, established religion and national morality.[20]

As can be detected in phrases that acknowledge the popularity of the Cockneys' cultural output, and by the vehemence of the Tory attacks themselves, this group was enormous, and therefore an enormous threat to the cultural ascendancy of the conservative establishment. The attacks were, as Cox notes, 'in fact a counterattack, an act of recognition by ideological enemies of the gathering of writers around Leigh Hunt'.[21] Social distinction by education and cultural activities and interests (in which the classics played a key role) was becoming ever more difficult to maintain in a newly industrial and commercial Britain, where basic education was improving, alternative routes to classical culture were becoming available, and increasing numbers of the emerging managerial and professional classes were acquiring the means to buy a classical education for their children. Rolf Lessenich puts it well, when he writes:

> It was a standing joke with Tories that Whigs and Dissenters, who fashioned themselves and Britain in the liberal succession of Athens with its cultural and religious variety and tolerance, knew neither Attic Greek nor refined manners due to their alleged ignorance of the Classical Tradition.[22]

In the October 1817 edition of *Blackwood's Magazine*, readers would find a new feature bearing the title: 'ON THE COCKNEY SCHOOL OF POETRY'. They could tell that it was just the beginning of a new series by the fact that the column's second line was given over entirely to a generously sized 'No. I'.[23] Immediately below was the epigraph or motto taken from a poem written by the almost entirely obscure poet Cornelius Webb, whom Keats referred to as a 'poetaster' and who appears as something of a hanger-on at the social gatherings of the Cockneys.[24]

> Our talk shall be (a theme we never tire on)
> Of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Byron,
> (Our England's Dante) – Wordsworth – HUNT, and KEATS,
> The Muses' son of promise; and of what feats
> He may yet do.

As Cox notes, however, Webb was, at the time, a relatively well-published poet with strong ideological as well as stylistic ties to the Cockneys, and 'In praising his colleagues in strong terms, Webb brought down abuse upon himself and

them, for *Blackwood's* and its conservative allies could not allow a claim for cultural power by the liberal Hunt circle to go unchallenged.'[25] Poor, forgotten Cornelius Webb was a convenient scapegoat. The crime of which he is undoubtedly guilty was the provision of so tantalizingly a distilled version of what Lockhart and his cronies hated most about Hunt and the Cockneys, which was their high-profile trespassing on areas of high culture previously enclosed (like the common land) by the gentry via the expenses of a classical education and foreign travel. It is interesting that the language of trespass is directly invoked by Maginn in 1821, when he calls the Cockney poet Bryan Waller Proctor, alongside Haynes and Dillon, 'poachers on the domains of tragedy'.[26] The Harrow-educated Proctor, also known as Barry Cornwall, was a commercially successful proponent of the Cockney classical poet. Now, like Webb, few have heard of him.

There were by this point – in the age, for example, of a democratizing educational press and improvements to working- and middle-class living conditions and education, and increased access to museums and reproductions of 'high' art – a considerable number and variety of alternative routes, and shortcuts, to ancient Mediterranean and Renaissance culture. People could sail the seven seas through cheap novels and travel journals, explore ancient monuments and admire classical material culture through the line drawings of Henry Moses (d. 1870), and even adorn their suburban boxes (in the parlance of *Blackwood's*) with faux-marble busts of their favourite classical poets made from plaster or papier-mâché.[27] Thanks in part to Hunt's friend Vincent Novello (1781–1861), who established Novello & Co., and then later his son, who really innovated the cheap music press, anyone who could afford an upright piano could now learn to play in their own homes the songs (from sheet music) which they could never have hoped to afford to hear in the concert halls. This was a mixed blessing for the thin-walled metropolitans, but a dramatic example of the wide-ranging cultural democratization in action in Regency London. Newly empowered and culturally confident, these intolerable parvenus with their heads full of 'inadequate' translations and papier-mâché Venuses had now begun writing poetry, and, what's worse, people were reading it and putting it on a level with 'real poets'! That is, in any case, the kind of class-based incredulity the *Blackwood's* reviewers would have had their readers feel.

However much the contemporary conservative critics damaged the reputations and consequent receptions of the cultural output of this new breed of artist, the reality is that these 'parvenus', powerfully represented by the Cockney School – but by no means limited to them – were not creating inferior

cultural artefacts; they were simply creating different kinds of artistic product for new audiences, new readerships, largely uninterested in, if not entirely free from, the class connotations of their production, in which I include the nuances of their unorthodox, occasionally mediated genesis.[28] Keats's ecstatic, inspired and (therefore?) 'masturbatory' poetry has been ingeniously classified and devalued by critics, following in the prints of Byron and the likes of William Gifford and Lockhart. For example, Marjorie Levinson, in a sophisticated yet potentially misleading analysis, writes of how

> the early readers [of Keats's poetry] sensed the violence of Keats's raids upon that empowering system: a violence driven by the strongest desire for an authorial manner and means, and for the social legitimacy felt to go with it. In the alienated reflexiveness of Keats's poetry, the critics read the signature of a certain kind of life, itself the sign of a new social phenomenon.[29]

This is *exactly* what was going on in the minds of the classically educated and reactionary critics, and those of the readers who took their word for gospel. But it is also categorically *not* the reception of his circle, nor of the majority of Keats's readers, once he had them (after his death), and, even more importantly, *not* what scholars should impart unchallenged into twenty-first century critical discourse. It does not take into account the plurality of readerships in Romantic-era Britain. Influential though the *Blackwood's* and *Quarterly* reviewers undoubtedly were, their opinion tells only one – and one extremely partisan – side of a far more complex reception history. In this cynical tradition of criticism, poems that openly celebrate encounters with high culture have long been understood as masturbatory, middle-class faux pas, or expressions of social anxiety. There is logic in such readings, but little sense. How many of us read *On Chapman's Homer* and find in it the anguished yelp of a Cockney upstart? We can be safe in the assumption that it was not written for the reader who thinks that way, but for a reader or listener who was willing to be swept along with the poet's genuine excitement of connecting with something of the spirit of deep-browed Homer, in the only way he knew how – which is, of course, dependent upon his complex class conditioning – but not necessarily negatively so. Although it may influence a reader's reception of the sonnet, the fact that Keats had never read Homer in Greek does not make his poem culturally inferior, nor does it mean that Keats was suffering from any kind of cultural or social anxiety, nor does it make it a rooky faux pas. The poem was written for the likes of Leigh Hunt, the readers of the *Examiner*, and all those people who could share in the defiant spirit, if not the actual experience, of turning one's back on Alexander Pope's 'gentle' couplets

and diving headlong into the rugged and (according to Keats) somehow more authentic lines of George Chapman's Elizabethan translation.

The direct connection to classical inheritance through scholarship was already in Keats's own time being forcibly called into question, for example when Elgin stripped the Parthenon of its frieze and other architectural features, and shipped them to London in 1808. By 1816, following a noisy public debate, they were eventually bought by the government and housed (for all to see and without appointment) in the newly built British Museum. Britain was divided on the matter of the marbles' authenticity. Wealthy connoisseurs of the Dilettanti, led by Richard Payne Knight (1751–1824), said they were Roman replicas, but the community of artistic practitioners rallied. Indeed, it was the voice of the 'Cockney Raphael' that helped to swing the debate; Benjamin Robert Haydon, a professional artist and central figure of the Cockney circle, played an important role in the verification of the Parthenon marbles. Against towering opposition, Haydon vociferously wrested cultural authority away from the connoisseur, the scholar and the moneyed elite, and demonstrated to all that the professional creative practitioner's voice was not only as loud, but as culturally valuable, as that of the traditionally educated amateur. After weeks of waiting to be called upon as witness to the Select Committee, he finally took to print. In Hunt's *Examiner* and other newspapers he wrote an impassioned open letter, entitled *On the Judgement of Connoisseurs being preferred to that of Professional Men*:

> In no other profession is the opinion of the man who has studied it for his amusement preferred to that of him who has devoted his soul to excel in it.[30]

Keats would spend, we are told, hours among the marbles.[31] While others obsessed over their disputed provenance, he wallowed among the objects, which had (as far as he was concerned) fallen straight from ancient Athens, and the workshop of Phidias himself. There was no more direct route to ancient Greece than these stones carved by the hands of the ancients. He wrote many a celebration of what he would in *Ode on Indolence* call 'Phidian lore', beginning with his two sonnets addressed to Haydon (March 1817), who first took him to see the marbles. Their stony presence is never too far beneath the surface of the five odes he wrote in the spring of 1819, breaking through most visibly, perhaps, in that 'heifer lowing at the skies' in stanza four of his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, which has as a literary source also Catullus' sixty-fourth poem.[32]

In Keats's *On the Elgin Marbles* he compares himself to a 'sick eagle looking at the sky'. Hardly – at first glance – a celebrative simile. But it is. Keats was so awestruck by the workmanship and beauty of the stonework that he felt artistically

dwarfed by their achievement. This is, of course, an expression of inferiority, but one of inspiration as opposed to depression. It is similar to the way he imagined his favourite poet, Shakespeare, towering above him when he likens himself, also addressing Haydon – but this time in a letter (May 1817) – to a Shakespearean samphire picker half way up the 'Cliff of Poesy'. But he saw beneath himself the (to him) entirely mundane Alexander Pope, whose words seemed 'like mice to mine'. His expressions of inferiority are often attended on by ones of extraordinary self-confidence, easily forgotten when focus is placed on his humble expression rather than the lofty figures with which he compared himself.

In response to Hunt's *Story of Rimini* (1816), Webb's socially hubristic poem and the 'Cockney' breach of the ring-fenced worlds of literature and scholarship, Lockhart whetted his quill and produced nothing less than a masterclass of critical genocide. He reduced in one article a socio-economically and educationally diverse group of independent thinkers, bound by a shared commitment to social reform and an inclusive cultural practice, to a vulgar bunch of mal-educated and lowborn pretenders, 'The Cockney School'.

> Its chief Doctor and Professor is Mr Leigh Hunt . . . a man of little education. He knows nothing of Greek, almost nothing of Latin, and his knowledge of Italian literature is confined to a few of the most popular of Petrarch's sonnets, and an imperfect acquaintance with Ariosto, through the medium of Mr Hoole.[33]

In one fell swoop, Lockhart destroyed any claim Hunt might have made to scholarship, or even the basic knowledge needed for one who dared to propose a new generation of poets.[34] As always, it is hard to disentangle the truth from Lockhart's scathing fiction. Hunt apparently 'knows nothing' of the classics and only knows some Italian poetry through translation. The factually unfounded abuse continues. Lockhart points out Hunt's various wants, including any direct engagement with French and Spanish literature.[35] Lockhart, as a university-educated and prize-winning classical scholar, could without qualm look down upon the classical attainment of Hunt, who was (as he himself admitted) nothing more than a passionate reader of classical poetry and an intelligent graduate of Christ's Hospital.[36]

It was, of course, not only literature in which the Cockney professor was deficient. Lockhart attacks Hunt with numerous charges of parochialism:

> He raves perpetually about 'green fields', 'jaunty streams', and 'o'er-arching leafiness', exactly as a Cheapside shop-keeper does about the beauties of his

> box on the Camberwell road. [. . .] His fame as a poet [. . .] is entirely confined to the young attorneys and embryo-barristers about town. In the opinion of these competent judges, London is the world – and Hunt is a Homer.[37]

It is in this passage that we see that the demographic with which Lockhart associates Hunt and the Cockneys corresponds not at all with the working classes. The jobs listed here are explicitly middle class and metropolitan – junior lawyers and suburban grocers. The King of Cockaigne can only be considered a Homer by those whose cultural horizon extends no further than the overcrowded and morally corrupt capital. Lockhart's nicknaming Hunt the 'Cockney Homer' is just one of many apparently ridiculous epithets attributed to members of the school. We have already met Haydon, known to Lockhart as the 'Cockney Raphael';[38] in the same article (the fifth Cockney School attack) William Hazlitt was dubbed the 'Cockney Aristotle', and Keats is in one place referred to as 'Esculapius' to Hunt's Apollo.[39] As upper-class readers, 'we' are encouraged to laugh scoffingly at the group's hopeless pretensions to classical knowledge.

In the third article in the series, Lockhart as 'Z' closes with a classical flourish, saying that Hazlitt and Hunt are 'Arcades ambo / Et cantare pares . . .'[40] Lockhart's use of classical allusion, both the more obviously ironic epithets aligning them comically with leading and cherished figures from classical, or at least classic, culture, and the more erudite allusion to Virgil's *Eclogues* 7.4, are designed simultaneously to flatter his classically educated readers and shame those Cockneys, who – we are to imagine (mistakenly) – could not understand the jokes made by the critic at their expense. The reviewer gives Hunt and Hazlitt little room for manoeuvre; they are at once incurably metropolitan and ridiculously rustic. 'Arcades ambo' (literally 'Arcadians both', i.e. people from the pastoral common-place of Arcadia), however, seems to have naturally been employed by aristocrats at the time as a damning class slur. The Eton and Oxford-educated lawyer and critic John Taylor Coleridge (1790–1876) – nephew of the poet – responded learnedly, referring to the Cockney king in a mid-1818 *Quarterly Review* as 'Arcadian Hunt' – which might at first glance appear a compliment.[41] Lord Byron too, in a letter to his friend Hobhouse, applies the term to the radicals Henry 'Orator' Hunt and William Cobbett on 22 April 1820, pinning down the term with a quick '*id est*, blackguards both'.[42] In the same letter he follows immediately with: 'Why our classical education alone – should teach us to trample on such unredeemed dirt . . . and all who follow them.' It will be noted that in this usage, too, there are both political and class dimensions. This, of course, results from the fact that the struggle for social reform and its

reactionary suppression were at the heart of contemporary political debate. Since the classical education was the foundation of both of Burke's twin bastions of an unequal yet stable society, religion and gentility, it is no wonder that the Greek and Roman classics were central, too, to both the social and the political debate.

Lockhart, writing in 'The Cockney School of Poetry, No. IV', laments the madness gripping the British people:

> Of all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than the metromanie.[43]

But what does Lockhart mean by *metromanie*?[44] Literally, it means 'a madness for poetry'. But it speaks, here, of far more than a love of verse, symbolizing a heightened cultural confidence among the lower classes:

> The just celebrity of Robert Burns and Miss Ballie [both poets of humble origin] has had the melancholy effect of turning the heads of we know not how many farm-servants and unmarried ladies; our very footmen compose tragedies, and there is scarcely a superannuated governess in the island that does not leave a roll of lyrics behind her in her bandbox.

The reason for his lamentation is that the poet John Keats is a victim of the malady, and this article is dedicated to the character assassination of Lockhart's Keatsian persona. It is a persona because, as with Lockhart's portrayal of Hunt, it has a loose relationship with the facts of Keats's life. Likening Keats to raving governesses and farm-servants is his first blow, and is partially responsible for the persistent perception of Keats as an impoverished and culturally malnourished young man, which he was not.[45] On the subject of Keats's longer narrative poem *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* (1818), Lockhart wrote:

> The old story of the moon falling in love with a shepherd, so prettily told by a Roman classic, and so exquisitely enlarged and adorned by one of the most elegant of German poets, has been seized upon by Mr John Keats, to be done with as might seem good unto the sickly fancy of one who never read a single line either of Ovid or Wieland.[46]

Keats's choice of subject, a classical story already told by Ovid and Wieland, is a key provocation. How dare a man who did not go to one of the great schools before one of the two ancient universities take on the tale of Endymion? 'His Endymion', Lockhart continues, 'is not a Greek shepherd loved by a Grecian goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester dreaming a fantastic dream at

the full of the moon.' Keats's distance from his source is therefore a further provocation. Keats used the story as the premise for his own original work, imagining how the socially unequal relationship between the shepherd boy Endymion and the goddess Phoebe might be conceived in his own day, according to the modern mythology of transcendence and dream states, which were, as has been endlessly documented, important to Romantic poets.

The effective internalization of the divine and the implicit challenge to social hierarchy of mortal/immortal relations were as noxious to the establishment as the unapologetic celebration of the pagan imagery and mythology. Add to that the self-aware and stylized delivery of Keats – at his most Cockney – flaunting his loose rhymes, compound adjectives and Huntian neologistic adverbs, which they all knew so frustrated their Tory critics. In the face of such Tory-baiting it is perhaps a wonder Lockhart is not more splenetic:

> From his prototype Hunt, John Keats has acquired a sort of vague idea that the Greeks were a most tasteful people, and that their mythology can be so finely adapted for the purposes of poetry as theirs. It is amusing to see what a hand the two Cockneys make of this mythology: the one confesses that he never read the Greek tragedians, and the other knows Homer only from Chapman – and both of them write about Apollo, Pan, nymphs, muses and mysteries as might be expected from persons of their education.[47]

The attack again focuses on their lack of knowledge and lack of education. Lockhart attempts to laugh it off ('it is amusing . . .'), but he has betrayed his true feelings, his true fears. If this kind of *metromanie* is as widespread as he sets out at the beginning of the article, then surely the threat it poses is no laughing matter. Lockhart's attempted conflation of the *metromanie* of governesses and farm-servants and the radical rewriting of classical myth is unconvincing.

Although the two kinds of poetry appear immiscible, this does not mean that they are not born from the same movement, the cultural empowerment of the middle classes. Lockhart's infamous criticism, although highly visible at the time, due to the high circulation of *Blackwood's*, and now, due to its fiendish literary quality and, ironically, its affiliation with the poets it sought to destroy, was in the wider perspective tantamount to the barking of a dog in a tropical storm. The popular invasion of high culture was well under way. This said, the impact of the Cockneys' radical appropriation of the classical, a natural consequence of the wider popular movement, was to some extent stemmed by the Tory critics, who undermined their opponents any which way they could.[48] In such criticism the fused languages of moral conduct and class predominate:

> No man whose mind has ever been imbued with the smallest knowledge or feeling of classical poetry or classical history, could have stooped to profane and vulgarize every association in the manner which has been adopted by this 'son of promise' [Keats].[49]

This can be paraphrased as: 'only a man with no classical education could be so morally corrupt (to *profane*) as to render in the language of the common people (*vulgarize*) the cultural material that comes from the ancient world (every association [of the classical]) and is digested in some kind of secret and obscure way (the *feeling*) by those of us who have been expensively educated at the top establishments'. As Olivia Smith neatly summarizes in *The Politics of Language 1791–1819*, the kinds of polarization in play completely obscure the far more subtle and varied relationships between social class, education and language of the day:

> A vulgar language was said to exist, a refined language was said to exist, and others were not recognized. Such extreme concepts dismissed everyone except the classically educated as an identifiable group characterized by their incapacity for refined thought and moral behavior. Varieties of social class and modes of education were disregarded as diverse groups of people were reduced to one, most disreputable kind . . .[50]

In the sixth Cockney attack, Lockhart as 'Z' gets even more creative, pretending that Hunt has died and that his recent collection of poems in *Foliage* (1818) was printed posthumously. 'There is', Lockhart explains, 'too much reason to believe, that this everlasting tea-drinking was the chief cause of Leigh Hunt's death. The truth is, that he had for many years been sipping *imitation-tea*, a pleasant but deleterious preparation – more pernicious by far than the very worst port'.[51] Why death by tea? Tea-drinking was just one aspect of Hunt's flamboyantly countercultural lifestyle that critics such as Lockhart and Croker simply loved to hate. It was commonly associated with domesticity and considered a feminine pastime, in comparison with the manly drinking of coffee, which was done in the male-dominated coffeehouses of the big cities.[52] Others ranged from his famous yellow breeches and open collar to his vegetarianism and 'chaunting' sonnets in public places. It was tea-drinking that Lockhart would focus on in his review of *Foliage*, because among the collection's miscellanies was a verse epistle to Hazlitt containing the following paean to Hunt's wife's tea:

> The tea made by one, who although my wife be,
> If Jove were to drink it, would soon be his Hebe,

> Then silence a little, a creeping twilight,
> Then an egg for your supper with lettuces white,
> And a moon and friend's arm to go home with at night.[53]

Lockhart reproduced this extract in *Blackwood's*, prefacing it with: 'Mr Hunt's notions of sociality are moderate ones indeed . . .' The joy Hunt takes in the simpler things in life was a part of his programme of promoting thrifty forms of entertainment, which enabled him in a proto-hippy fashion to opt out of the daily grind.

> The poets only do with their imaginations what all might do with their practice, – live at as cheap, natural, easy, and truly pleasurable a rate as possible; for it is not industry, but a defeat of the ends of it, and a mere want of ideas, to work and trouble themselves so much as most of our countrymen do; neither is it taste, but an ostentatious want of it, that is expensive . . .[54]

Lockhart continues: 'Think of the delicacy of the compliment paid to the lady who pours out the gun-powder! Jupiter drinking tea at Hampstead with Mr and Mrs Hunt, and Mr Hazlitt! "Cedite Romani Scriptores Cedite Graii."' The Latin quotation is deeply ironic. It comes from Propertius 2. 34 (line 41) and has been well translated as 'make way you Roman writers, and you Greek, make way!' The following line in the Roman poem runs 'nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade' ('a [something] greater than the *Iliad* is born').[55] By the implication of the unspoken line, Hunt's epistle to Hazlitt is humorously and mockingly likened to Virgil's great epic, the *Aeneid*, to the arrival of which Propertius was alluding. The joke, of course, demands not only knowledge of the Latin language but also a familiarity with the literary context of the quotation. It was a relatively common citation, the kind to be found in a book of quotations, but it would surely have been one of those tags embossed on the brains of all leavers from the leading schools.

In the same collection is a poem called *Fancy's Party, a fragment*. It has as its epigraph a quotation from Manilius, 'Juvat ire per ipsum / Aera et immense spatientem vivere caelo', for which he offers the following translation in the line below: 'We take our pleasure through the very air, / And breathing the great heav'n, expatiate there.'[56] Even in the translation can be seen Hunt's desire to display in the ancient poets a precedent for his own radical blend of sociality and his much scoffed-at 'philosophy of cheer'; the 'breathing' of the air and the somewhat quirky 'expatiation' at once recall Hunt's famed rambles up on Hampstead Heath, and the scarcely breathable air of the newly industrial

city – especially downwind of the factory quarters where the working poor lived. Hunt has chopped off the end of Manilius' oft-quoted sentence. The Roman astrological poet continues in his imagined journey from the ground, through the earth's atmosphere, towards outer space and ultimately the hallowed knowledge of the movements of the cosmos: 'and get to know the signs and contrary movements of the stars' (signaque et aduersos stellarum noscere cursus). Hunt literally tethers the cosmic ambition expressed by Manilius in lines 13–15 of book one of his *Astronomica*, and makes what has now become a relatively bland fragment read as a truncated yet enraptured Cockney manifesto. What 'they', in Hunt's epigraph, are so pleased to escape from and leave behind on the earth's surface is the real subject of the poem. And Hunt reveals this, reflecting briefly before taking flight bound for his ethereal *locus amoenus*:

> In this poetic corner
> With books about and o'er us,
> With busts and flowers,
> And pictured bowers,
> And the sight of fields before us;
> Why think of these fatalities,
> And all their dull realities?
> 'Tis fancies now must charm us;
> Nor is the bliss ideal,
> For all we feel,
> In woe or weal,
> Is, while we feel it, real:
> Heaven's nooks they are for getting in,
> When weeping weather's setting in.

'Et in Arcadia ego': thoughts of the recent dead, at Waterloo and Peterloo, leer into Hunt's poetic corner. He makes it absolutely clear that his cheerful escapism is a direct response to the horrors of the present.

But back to the tea party:

> One is at a loss to know if Jupiter staid supper, short commons for a god, who, in days of yore, went to sleep on Juno's bosom, full of nectar and ambrosia –
>
> An egg for his supper and lettuces white!
>
> Then think of letting Jove decamp, without so much as offering him a bed – leaning on the arm of Mr William Hazlitt – and perhaps obliged, after all, to put up for the night at Old Mother Red-Caps![57]

Old Mother Red-Caps was a famous coaching inn on the site where *The World's End* now stands in Camden. Needless to say, it was not the kind of place where the king of the gods, or even any respectable gentleman, would be seen dead. Hunt's cottage in the Vale of Health was small, too small to comfortably accommodate his family and houseguests, which is exactly what Lockhart wanted to remind his readers. When imagining what it would be like when Byron visited Hunt, Lockhart wrote: 'We have sometimes imagined what "confusion worse confounded" must have reigned in the box at Hampstead, when the maid-servant announced his lordship, more especially if it happened to be washing-day.'[58] How could a man who could not even afford to play host to a member of the gentry have the nerve to write about the Greek gods, even in jest?

In his criticism of Hunt's translation, Lockhart does not mince his words: 'Hunt makes Homer call a fountain "clear and crisp", which had he ever done, Apollo would have shot him instantly dead.' By his own admission, Hunt's translations of Homer were experiments of 'how far I could give the intelligent reader, who is no scholar, a stronger sense of the natural energy of the original, than has yet been furnished him'.[59] He wanted to provide his English readers with an approximation of Homer's style and an opportunity to get closer to the Greek poet than other translators had before him. The bold directness of Lockhart's criticism indicates his utter command of the subject. Still by this point a young man (twenty-three in 1817), Lockhart had long excelled in his classical studies as something of a child prodigy.

After a spell at Glasgow Grammar School, Lockhart was admitted to the University, where at the age of thirteen he won the gold medal in Greek on the infamous Blackstone Chair. This was literally a chair with a slab of black marble inlaid, on which the quaking examinee would sit before a public audience and take a grilling from his professor on the book list he had 'professed' (to know) before the happy moment when the sand in the glass timer ran out. It is said that Lockhart professed a formidable list of books and showed 'an intimate knowledge of them in translation and comment'. To win, as Lockhart did, the medal in Greek was to be proved 'a very sound classicist'.[60] The following year, 1808, saw Lockhart being awarded the Snell Exhibition to Balliol, Oxford, whence, in 1813, he graduated with first class honours. What he writes about the classical poets is usually full of insight, but what he writes of Hunt and friends is always full of biased, misleading and manipulative bile.

> The following description, though very conceited and passionless, seems to us the best thing the late Mr Hunt ever did 'in the poetic line'. But instead of

> breathing 'of the fine imagination of the Greeks', it is nothing more than a copy in words of a picture in oil. Mr Hunt used to be a great lounger in picture-dealer's shops … Whenever you meet with a vivid image in his verses, you are sure that it is taken from a picture.[61]

There is much truth in the fact that Hunt, and indeed Keats, were highly influenced by classicizing artwork. What is misleading is the implication that this creative practice is exclusive of other more 'textual', 'direct' and thus 'legitimate' engagements with classical sources. The contemporary reader may well have followed Lockhart in the estimation that creating 'a copy in words of a picture in oil' is somehow a lesser poetic achievement than conceiving something entirely new. Without the heightened preoccupation with artistic originality, this may strike many readers today as a foolish argument. In any case, the selective reproduction in *Blackwood's* and damnation of Hunt's polemical collection with false praise, such as this, is typical of the slippery sophism at work in the Z attacks.[62]

We ought not to forget that he was conducting these callous character assassinations partly for comic effect. His particular blend of invective is consistently highly amusing. He has a mastery over the stinging insult without which English literature would be considerably worse off. The harsher and more fanciful he gets, the funnier it is; the insults are protected from gratuitousness by his deft balance of biting reality and insightful readings of the Cockney poems. Were it not for Z's criticism, it would have been easy to see *Foliage* (1818), an important Romantic text, fall into obscurity. Hunt's more sociable lyrics often appear like those of a spoken word artist or performance poet. They are relaxed in form and designed to delight as much by the delivery and personality of the poet as by their textual content. John Wilson Croker memorably played on Coleridge's famous definition of poetry, when he defined Cockney poetry as consisting of 'the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language'.[63] He and Lockhart were on the same page:

> How could any man of high original genius ever stoop publicly, at the present day, to dip his fingers in the least of those glittering and rancid obscenities which float on the surface of Mr. Hunt's Hippocrene? His poetry is that of a man who has kept company with kept-mistresses. He talks indelicately like a tea-sipping milliner girl.

Back to tea. But, this time, the class import of tea-drinking is made explicit. It is the occupation of gossiping female apprentices in trade. Has Hunt, in his generous and progressive attempt to free himself and those around him of the

trappings of class division, defiled the holy spring of the ancient muses? Or has he instead incurred the wrath of a particularly sensitive establishment by exposing without reserve the countercultural and Graecomaniacal lifestyle of his social group to the public gaze?

By engaging freely with classical mythology and poetry ('not as a set of school-boy common-places which it was thought manly to give up'[64]), and including luxurious scenes of sexual excess, moral depravity and unapologetic display of pre-Christian religiosity, Hunt set out to disturb the very foundations upon which (Burke knew) class division stood, gentility and clergy, both themselves nourished by the classical education. The poetry (original and translated) of the Cockney School in the 1810s had a purposefully high irritant factor. The free and celebratory 'misuse' of classical subject matter was perfectly calibrated simultaneously to please their philhellenic readerships and rile their conservative adversaries. In all decency (it was thought), reference to classical deities and classical verse ought to be confined to the schoolboy's jotter and the yellowing pages of poets dead and gone. The classical in contemporary poetry had long since reached the status of cliché for the literary establishment. There was, we can assume, a greater tolerance in the wider reading public. Hunt did not become a successful newspaperman by writing and printing outmoded work. The Cockneys were tapping into the contemporary frenzy for 'all things Greek'; it was for many clearly the very height of fashion:

> There is something very curious [. . .] in the way in which he [Keats], and Mr Barry Cornwall also, have dealt with the Pagan mythology, of which they have made so much use in their poetry. Instead of presenting its imaginary persons under the trite and vulgar traits that belong to them in the ordinary systems, little more is borrowed from these than the general conception of their conditions and relations; and an original character and distinct individuality is bestowed on them, which has all the merit of invention, and all the grace and attraction of the fictions on which it is engrafted.[65]

The *Edinburgh Review*'s Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850) here observes that the Cockney classical is new in the way it comes at classical mythology. It avoids triteness and vulgarity by 'grafting' originality onto the graceful, attractive and, I would add, aesthetically 'on trend' fictions of classical myth. That is to say nothing of its reformist aesthetic, which would perhaps have repelled as many readers as it attracted. The example of 'the Greeks' was absolutely central to Hunt's recipe for a good life:

> The main feature of the book are a love of sociality, of the country, and of the fine imagination of the Greeks.[66]

Hunt's major poetic intervention, then, broke into three strands: sociality, Nature and his reception of ancient Greece (mediated in large part by Latin and English poetry, visual art and material culture).

Jeffrey admits that he 'scarcely recollect[s] a passage in all the writings of antiquity in which the passions of an immortal are fairly disclosed to the scrutiny and observations of men'. Keats and his associates were therefore adding cultural value to a tired subject matter by having 'created and imagined an entire new set of characters, and bringing closely and minutely before us the love and sorrows and perplexities of beings, with whose names and supernatural attributes we had long been familiar, without any sense or feeling of their personal character'. Jeffrey here lights upon a key factor: classical subject matter was *familiar* to readers (from their predominantly classical education), which situation allowed such things as classical travesties and burlesques to be popular, as well as reimagined classical mythological stories to build on classical reading and stretch it by allusive techniques of which Keats, for example, was a master.

Other critics were less indulgent of this original approach to classical mythology, as can be seen in a Cockney parody printed in the *Literary Journal*, entitled 'Pleasant Walks; A Cockney Pastoral – In the Manner of Leigh Hunt Esq'.[67] It takes the form of a verse epistle to Keats by Hunt.

> Do you not like [. . .]
> To go, and see the industrious pig root up
> The buried acorn, where the oaks shoot up,
> Making itself 'green head-dresses,'
> And 'leafy Wildernesses,'
> Lovely dryad! – and the 'young-eyed' lambs
> That walk by their dams,
> With their milk-white dresses,
> And their light prettinesses,
> And feet that go skipity-skip!
> And the sage cow,
> That munches the drooping newly-clad bough,
> Hanging its fresh'ning leaves o'er her head
> And her back's glossy red;
> O! these *are* objects for Castalian springs!
> But *I*, you know, can see 'the beautiful of things!'

This parody is useful for understanding the Tory perception of Cockney poetry. The haphazard and forced rhyming and the abundant compound adjectives exaggerate the Cockney style, while the comical appropriation of the classical head-dress and dryadic status to an 'industrious pig' truffling for an acorn highlights the perceived bathetic debasement of the classical in the hands of the Cockneys. The declaration of Hunt's farmyard scene as 'the objects for Castalian springs' shows the Cockneys getting the classics wildly wrong. Pseudo-Hunt's classical coronation of a pig is an example of his seeing classical beauty and wonder where none can possibly be. Nor is there any direct engagement with classical sources, which renders the Greek elements entirely decorative. The chattiness of the poem and Hunt's constant self-aggrandisement build a picture of Hunt as a wannabe aesthete suffering from a serious taste malfunction.

It is telling that in his criticism of *Foliage* (1818) Lockhart did not dwell on Hunt's translations from the Greek and Latin, aside from the passing swipe quoted above. Hunt's 'Evergreens; or Translations from the Poets of Antiquity' make up around half of the book, over one hundred pages. The poets translated are Homer, Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, Anacreon and Catullus. They all bear the unmistakable mark of Hunt's irrepressibly flamboyant and accessible style. Catullus, as honorary Greek, is represented by two of his most Greek compositions, the dark galliambic poem 63 ('Super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria'), which tells of the young man, Attis, who regrets his decision to join the celebrants of the mother goddess, Cybele, and the epithalamium 61 ('Collis o Heliconii'), which Hunt entitles 'The Nuptial Song of Julia and Manlius'. In reference to poem 63, Hunt rightly points out that 'among the other pieces' it 'comes as a spectre at noon-day'.[68]

Aside from the three episodes from Homer's *Iliad* and one from the *Odyssey*, Hunt was displaying an altogether different side of classical poetry from that traditionally exploited by the classical education. It would, no doubt, have stretched many university graduates, but not, we might suspect, the voracious Lockhart and friends of *Blackwood's*. Horace, Juvenal, Ovid and Virgil, the staples of the school curriculum, are conspicuously absent. Hunt explains the predominance of pastoral by expressing the opinion that the 'real genius and character [of those poets] the public have hitherto had no idea whatsoever given them by the translators.'[69] Whether or not he does this is the subject of another study.

This deliberate display of classical learning, in combination with the familiarity, liveliness and eminent readability of his translations, shows just how possible it was at the time for a man outside formal education but immersed in

his profession to navigate the realms of gold. It was undoubtedly not the young Keats alone who was inspired by this man to defy the gamekeepers of the literary establishment and trespass on classical land by whatever route necessary. Hunt's sunny depiction of antiquity was a welcome antidote to what he called 'the gross mistake of what they [the French school, and by extension their descendants] called classical'.[70] *Foliage*, and Cockney classicism as a whole, was also an antidote to the post-revolutionary gloom of the 1810s. Hunt's conception of Greek mythology was 'something which it requires more than mere scholarship to understand, – as the elevation of the external world and of accomplished humanity to the highest pitch of the graceful, and as embodied essences of all the grand and lovely qualities of nature'. The message wrapped up in the apparently innocuous expression 'mere scholarship' was the celestial fire wrapped up in Prometheus' heart-shaped fennel. This does not belong to you; it belongs to us. Every bit as incendiary as its Promethean counterpart, this message – in a time of intense social and cultural struggle – was identified by the government press as something which needed to be violently stamped out.

5

The Harmless Impudence of a Revolutionary

Radical Classics in 1850s London

Edmund Richardson

'I believe,' wrote Robert Brough, 'in the Revolution.'[1] Brough lived a short, precarious life – as poet, editor, burlesque writer, Bohemian, drunk and debtor – and staked a remarkable claim on the classical past. His ancient world spoke for the powerless in Victorian Britain – for the poor, the marginalized and the abandoned. He hoped that it would point the way towards a contemporary revolution. His life, his politics and his singular encounters with the classical past will be discussed in this chapter. It will focus on a period of acute political tension in Britain: the 1850s and the years surrounding the Crimean War. It will explore Brough's radical classics through three of his works: a volume of ballads, *Songs of the Governing Classes*, a failed 'squib', *Olympus in a Muddle*, and his greatest triumph – a burlesque *Medea*. The central questions of the chapter are these: could Brough rewrite antiquity to make the working classes into its heroes and heroines? And could he use that antiquity to reshape contemporary politics? For a time, he believed that he could. ' 'Tis wondrous', as he put it, 'how the smallest folks, / Whom you have wrong'd, can tease ye!'[2]

His ambitions could hardly have been larger. In a period when the working classes (with some notable exceptions)[3] rarely received a classical education, to claim antiquity for the dispossessed was an intensely ambitious agenda. But Brough's commitment and belief were equally intense. He listened to Britain's 'governing classes'[4] reinventing the past to justify their status and power, and heard only anxiety:

> We've lectures long
> By the Peers, on 'Art and Song,'–
> Pointing all the moral strong –
> 'Class array'd,
> 'Gainst its ruling class is wrong' –
> *Who's afraid?*[5]

Brough's determination to seize the ancient world was all the more remarkable because he himself never received a formal classical education:

> Robert Brough had neither Latin nor Greek [. . .]. I am sure, poor fellow, that he had a sufficient appreciation of the advantages of a classical education; but as from the age of fifteen or sixteen he had to earn his livelihood by the labour of his own hands and brain, the most he could do was to add to his stock of knowledge such adjuncts as he deemed most valuable for his working career.[6]

Born in London in April 1828, he grew up in Wales, where his father brewed 'Brough's Beer'. When Robert was thirteen, the brewery fell into bankruptcy – and he was soon sent out into the world to earn himself a living.

Brough's existence was far from an easy one. His days and years were harried and anxious. 'Poor Robert Brough', wrote the *New York Times*. 'In pure fun, in genuine mirth, there was no man in the whole range of English litterateurs worthy to break a lance with him [. . .]. A grim, sardonic, lachrymose man, with a very feeble constitution, he was only gay by fits and starts, and spirits and energy often deserted him when most required.'[7] 'Poor Brough' was rarely well. 'I never knew' remarked one of his friends later, 'anyone who was such a perfect martyr to dyspepsia.'[8] He nevertheless guzzled life – approaching it with immoderate delight and appetite – and became a fixture of London's literary Bohemia, 'a land', as Thackeray put it, 'of tin dish-covers from taverns, and foaming porter: a land of lotos-eating (with lots of cayenne pepper) [. . .] where most are poor'.[9] James Hannay captured the sweet chaos of Brough's days in his chronicle of London life, where Brough appears as 'Bob Marston':[10]

> Bob's horror of the polite and conventional world was such that he once gave it as a reason for leaving a place, that 'the clergyman of the parish had called upon him.' 'By Jove,' he went on 'when it came to *that*, I thought it was time to be going back to London.' A dress-coat was a Nessus' shirt to him, and patent-leather boots a torture [. . .].
>
> How kind of thee, Bob, after taking a house, to say to an intimate friend, 'I'm a householder now, old boy, and always good to be bail!' How cheerfully didst thou reflect, when circumstances forced thee to drink the smallest of beer, that at least the stuff had the merit of being wet. The law itself did not appal or humiliate thy Aristophanic spirit; for when a cruelly sarcastic beak [magistrate], in inflicting a fine of five shillings, inquired whether certain fluids did not impregnate thy writings, the answer was ready – 'Yes, and they sell in consequence.'[11]

Brough worked urgently: he depended upon his words to feed himself and his family. Time to reflect was a luxury he never possessed, and little of his writing satisfied him. When short of money and in wretched health, he wrote, in the preface to his *Life of Sir John Falstaff*, 'The author may be permitted one little word of apology, and, perhaps, self-justification [. . .]. The concluding portion of his labours has been achieved under acute and prolonged physical suffering. This may be no excuse for loose or indifferent writing; but, in the memorable words of Ben Johnson to John Sylvester – *it is true*.'[12] To this, the *Saturday Review* responded: 'If this is the true account of the production of any book whatever, its author ought to be thoroughly ashamed of himself.' As for Brough's book itself, it was 'bad throughout; yet we must own in honesty that we have not read the whole'.[13]

Contempt answered Brough all his professional life. No matter how successful he became – and many of his classical burlesques were undisputed triumphs – there was not a work of his which was not greeted with scorn and condescension by some. Along with the other 'most miserable scribblers of burlesque',[14] Brough was a favoured target of the *Saturday Review* – which judged his writing 'nothing less than an elaborate effort to vulgarize one of the noblest productions of human genius'.[15] This was a common refrain: lacking the capacity to respond to 'the noblest productions' properly, Brough sullied whatever he touched. Even his greatest triumph, a joyous extraordinary burlesque of *Medea*, was altogether too stained with 'the mud of Cockney existence' for *The Times*:

> If the whole human race were suddenly deprived of the power of writing mock tragedy, so that the art of burlesquing became classed with those obsolete processes that were peculiar to the ancient inhabitants of Egypt and of China, there would be no great cause for lamentation. [. . .] As soon as a poetical thought begins to show itself over the horizon, it is surely a work of supererogation to begin encumbering it with weights of facetiousness that drag it down into the mud of Cockney existence.[16]

What could a Cockney have to say to Euripides? Brough could not opt out of the discourses of classics and class. By stepping, without a classical education, into London's literary world, he stepped into them. His critics (and they were many – Brough made enemies with abandon)[17] reached for the full weight of Victorian classicism to silence and to ridicule him – 'fellows who, if once you get into their pillory, will pelt you with Greek roots, like so many cabbage-stumps'.[18] As one of Brough's friends put it, 'we [Brough and his collaborators

on one radical magazine], in our rivals' opinion, were Radicals, scoffers, ribalds, ignoramuses, lacking the blessings of a University education – mere pressmen, living by our wits, and without many of them to live on. We held the opposition to be bigoted Tories, self-sufficient prigs, hammering out their thin coating of classics to cover their otherwise universal ignorance.'[19] 'Pelted' with antiquity, Brough could abandon the field, or he could claim the classics on his own terms.

Brough was never inclined to submit to the better judgement of his 'betters'. He was 'an ardent hater'[20] – a passionate opponent of the privileged classes. 'That he had a fierce hatred of the governing classes there is no doubt.'[21] 'I have often wondered', wrote one friend, 'what gave Robert Brough that deep vindictive hatred of wealth and rank and respectability which permeated his life [. . .]. It was probably innate; it was certainly engrained. It was largely increased by poverty.'[22] And Brough was well aware that classics and radical politics had a history together. One scholar, Barthold Georg Niebuhr, fascinated him in particular.[23] In 1828, Julius Hare and Connop Thirlwall had translated Niebuhr's *History of Rome*[24] from German into English.[25] When the translation was published, *The Quarterly Review* alleged that Niebuhr's history was not only academically unsound but also politically explosive.[26] Students at Heidelberg had recently been reading Niebuhr, it remarked, and the results – evidence of the destructive power of the 'wrong' kind of classics to established authority – had not been pleasant:

> At this moment the university of Heidelberg is completely deserted. It appears that these ungovernable youths were holding democratic meetings; and a report having spread that the Grand Duke of Baden intended to arrest some of the leaders, the whole swarm of about eight hundred burst forth into the streets, bawling out *Burschen, heraus!* 'Turn out, turn out,' and marched off to a town a few leagues from Heidelberg, from whence they dispatched terms of capitulation to their professors.[27]

There is little evidence that students in Heidelberg were truly driven to riot and revolution by their reading of Niebuhr. But the widespread unease caused by his singularly dense (for many, impenetrable)[28] history is striking. Classics, in the wrong hands (in the right hands), was combustible. Brough, then, had cause to hope that antiquity's potential to spark off social agitation – widely acknowledged – was largely untapped.

Of course, there was no revolution. And Robert Brough's name has no place in nineteenth-century political history. His story should be simple. An

ever-earnest, ever-hopeful revolutionary, whose efforts to stoke public anger against the 'governing classes' never found success, whose radical classics never ignited.[29] But it is both more troubled and more complex. Brough deserves a place in this volume not just because he tried to put classics and class together, but because he found it impossible, and was forced to put his hopes aside. As Henry Stead explores in his Introduction, those who struggled for social reform – and sought to put the classics to work in that struggle – encountered setbacks, failure and ridicule at least as often as success.

Throughout his adult life, Brough was indeed 'an ardent hater.'[30] But his hatred was tamed, and his radical classics were muzzled: by an official pen, by collaborators – and ultimately, out of stark economic necessity, by Brough himself. Brough's story demands that we question the stability and authenticity of class politics and class positioning in nineteenth-century classicism. The dialogue between classics and class is altogether more elusive than it might at first seem: even the most strident texts, even the most 'ardent haters', are veined with contradictions, accommodations, censorship and self-sabotage.

Vulgar declamation

The summer of 1855 was a bad time to be an aristocrat in Britain. Daily reports on the Crimean War – stuffed with instances of incompetence and mismanagement by aristocratic generals – fuelled increasing public anger. British commanders such as Lord Raglan and Lord Lucan, who entered the war imagining themselves as ancient heroes reborn,[31] had their ambitions blasted into bathos by the Russian winter: 'Our generals' marquees were as incapable of resisting the hurricane as the bell-tents of the common soldiers. Lord Lucan was seen for hours sitting up to his knees in sludge amid the wreck of his establishment, meditative as Marius amid the ruins of Carthage.'[32] Were these men truly born to lead? Many found it hard to believe. From Parliament to the village hall, inherited privilege came under steady attack. Lord Palmerston, on the defensive, was heard to snap at one MP: 'He performs what he thinks a public duty in pointing out old errors and instances of mismanagement in regard to the army [. . .], and has thought proper to mingle with his observations and comments a deal of what I must call vulgar declamation against the aristocracy of this country.'[33] In this public mood, Robert Brough saw an opportunity.

In June 1855, he put the final touches to his *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'* – a collection of ballads with one very large, simple target:

> The feeling of which the following ballads are the faintest echo and imperfect expression, is a deeply-rooted belief that to the institution of aristocracy in this country (not merely to its 'undue preponderance,' but to its absolute existence) is mainly attributable all the political injustice [. . .] we have to deplore – a feeling by no means recently implanted or even greatly developed in the writer's heart, but one which the preparation of the public mind by recent events and disclosures has afforded him the opportunity of spreading.[34]

Songs of the 'Governing Classes' was saturated with the classics – but with a shabby, shameful past, not a glorious one. A succession of tawdry aristocrats creep across the pages, caught half-way between the nineteenth century and the ancient world:

> Lord J.'s a sage – the Viscount P.[almerston]
> A statesman sound – Lord X., a hero;
> Some good in all the great must be,
> Suppose we look for it – in Nero.
>
> There is a tale, devoid of proof,
> That, for a lark, he set Rome burning,
> And fiddled on his palace roof [. . .].
> *Row Polkas* to each homestead's crash,
> To ev'ry death – *Pop goes the Weasel!*[35]

Glib though the rhymes may be, Brough's appropriation of the classical was the opposite of perfunctory – he was keenly aware of the connections which had been forged between classics and radical politics earlier in the nineteenth century. The finale of *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'* crosses the story of Coriolanus – long bound up with political protest[36] – with the incendiary histories of Niebuhr. In this ballad of a Roman general, the hapless contemporary commanders of the Crimean War are clear in Brough's sights:

> 'Coriolanus snubs the People [. . .].
> Taxes are doubled, and armies perish;
> Slavery spreads.' 'He's your chosen man.'
> 'Yes, but suppose we chose the wrong one?'
> 'It can't be help'd!' Said the mob, 'It can.'

Roman history is edifying,
And though by Niebuhr, in the German tongue,
Proved to consist of nine-tenths lying,
Morals, here and there, may from it be wrung.

Soon, by the force of wrath and brickbats
Urged from Rome, the Consul flees.
This is the story of Coriolanus –
You may apply it how you please.[37]

Reading of this ancient Lord Lucan, driven out of ancient Rome by the 'brickbats' of a contemporary mob, a weary friend remarked that 'the statements in this poem will not bear analysis, and are to a certain extent uncalled for; but that Robert Brough felt them there is no doubt.'[38] *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'* is unapologetic in its anger, and unambiguous in its radical classicism. One cannot put down the volume uncertain of Brough's politics:

And as for giving working men
Ideas above their station
'Tis positively wrong, as well
As VULGAR DECLAMATION.[39]

A few short weeks after finishing *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'*, Brough was at work on another project, with his brother William – a 'squib'[40] entitled *Olympus in a Muddle, or, Wrong people in the wrong place*,[41] first performed on 23 August, at the Haymarket Theatre, London.

Its conceit was simple: 'Jupiter, having quarrelled with the Goddess of Wisdom, makes a new set of administrative arrangements, appointing the various gods and goddesses to the posts for which they are the most unfit.'[42] Mars became a scullion, Venus the goddess of war, Neptune was given the chariot of the sun – and so on. Light-hearted it may have been, but its political message was unmistakable. As the Crimean War rumbled on, 'the right men in the right place' had become a rallying-cry for reform. Politicians, army officers and newspapers alike argued that appointments to high office, henceforth, ought to be made on the basis of merit alone – not inherited privilege:

> Mr. Lindsay, M.P. [. . .] said [. . .] It was wrong in principle to intrust the government of the country to men simply because they happened to be lords and honourables, and that some other claim to govern ought to be required. [. . .]

> Sir C. Napier, who was received with great cheering, briefly thanked the meeting for the reception [. . .] believing that, after the disasters which had occurred in the Crimea, it was only by placing the right men in the right place that the safety of the country could be secured. (Loud cheers.)[43]

Brough's Olympus quickly descends into chaos. Jupiter's thunder fizzles, Apollo forgets the tea, Venus gets stuck in her armour, Mercury steals the spoons – and Poseidon crashes the chariot of the sun. Minerva watches it all unfold, and ensures that the audience do not miss the point:

> MINERVA: When Vulcan forged the bolts of Jove
> The bolts would work we know –
> When Phoebus Sol's bright Chariot drove
> He knew the way to go.
> And Mars could fight – Apollo write
> Each fitted was to do
> The work he was appointed for
> When this old world was new. [. . .]
> Each held a post he understood
> The duties of quite pat
> And wasn't chosen for being good
> At anything but that. [. . .]
> No doubt a many living now
> Would be delighted to
> Go back to the old plan pursued
> When this old world was new.[44]

Brough's timing was perfect. His targets were ripe, and public opinion was moving in his direction; his radical classics could scarcely have been more relevant. In fact, a few days before *Olympus in a Muddle* was first performed, *The Bradford Observer*, with remarkable hubris, cast the stagnating Crimean campaign as a new and greater *Iliad*, presided over by new Olympians:

> What was the conflict between Europe and Asia in the Trojan war, to the conflict pending for now two years between the principles of European and Asiatic thought and life! A new *Iliad* – we may call it a *Sebastopoliad* – is being enacted in these very days; a new epic of the nineteenth century is being developed before our eyes [. . .]. Homer [. . .] represented the denizens of Olympus as taking part in the Greco-Trojan conflict; but, though we have outlived the Grecian mythology, can we doubt that something corresponding to the Homeric gods and goddess is mixed up with the tremendous epic of our age?[45]

This Olympus seemed ready to fall. Indeed, when the manuscript of *Olympus in a Muddle* was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office, prior to being licensed for performance, the edgy censor demanded changes. Brough's final scene, where Jupiter admits his foolishness and capitulates to Minerva – and the script's last line in particular – cut rather too close for comfort:

> JUPITER: Oh
> Minerva – you come back – my best of friends. *(seizing her hands)*
> How for my audience shall I make amends?
>
> MINERVA: How! By allowing wisdom to direct
> The acts you do – the servants you select –
> Come then confess you're wrong – your steps retrace
> And put the right man in the right place.[46]

Minerva's speech could have been lifted from any of a hundred contemporary debates and public meetings – and would not be permitted on stage. The day-books of the Lord Chamberlain's office record the decision: 'Last line for "right men" put "right gods" "in the right places"'.[47] Beyond this, while the cuts demanded were not extensive, they were still recognized in reviews: 'The piece [*Olympus in a Muddle*] had a political tendency and we understand that the functionary so obnoxious to the English constitution and the English society – the licenser, or Lord Chamberlain – struck out all the points of the piece before he would grant his license for the performance.'[48] But the Lord Chamberlain's pencil did not prevent Brough's political message being heard loud and clear by audiences: it was 'an attempt to extract some amusement out of the political topic of the day.'[49] 'The reformers' favourite motto', as the *Theatrical Journal* noted, of ' "the right man in the right place" has been burlesqued.'[50]

In the summer of 1855, Robert Brough was unapologetic in his radical agenda. Loaded with puns though his work was, it was also in deadly earnest: forthright in its condemnation of the contemporary aristocracy, and its use of the classical past to advance his political agenda. Brough was betting that the time for radical classics had come – and scorned suggestions from his friends that he might moderate his views, or protect his position. As he wrote, with perhaps a trace of nervousness, in the preface to *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'*,

> I have been advised not to print my name to this volume of poems, (for poems I believe they are to be called, if bad ones) on the grounds, that being only known (where at all) as a 'profane jester and satirist,' the public will refuse to take me *au serieux*; and that what is at all events an attempted expression of earnest convictions, will stand a risk of being passed by as a collection of

> ephemeral squibs written in a spirit of the merest tomfoolery [. . .]. I have certainly made jokes for a livelihood, just as I should have made boots, if I had been brought up to the business [. . .]; but I do not see that I am thereby disqualified from giving serious utterance to my feelings on vital questions.[51]

But Brough's time had not come. That summer, in spite of his established reputation and previous successes, in spite of continuing public anger at the aristocracy, his audience melted away. *Songs of the 'Governing Classes'* had 'had scarcely any sale'.[52] *Olympus in a Muddle* was most vilely received. 'The piece', the *Daily News* wrote, 'went off very flatly; and when the curtain fell the applause was feeble, and mingled with loud disapprobation.'[53] The *Morning Chronicle* twisted the knife:

> The idea – not in itself novel – was treated without elegance or tact. The incidents introduced were common-place; the dialogue bald and flagging; the jokes – such as they were – nothing better than puns of a very so-so character. [. . .] Its progress was not unmarked by ominous sibillations, and the fall of the curtain was followed by a very vigorous contest between the hissers and the applauders.[54]

Brough had offered his radical classics to the world, and his audience had deserted him – staying, if they stayed, only to hiss. Reflecting on his life, from the end of the nineteenth century, one admirer wrote: 'Robert Brough was far too intensely genuine to devote himself exclusively to popular amusement [. . .]. His hatred of shams, his detestation of political self-seeking, his scorn of hereditary claims to govern or to oppress mankind [. . .] were deep and constant. Still, he knew the limitations of his own power to help the cause.'[55] At the beginning of 1855, Brough was not ready to acknowledge those 'limitations' – but by the end of the year, he had been compelled to do so.

Harmless impudence

As great a success as *Olympus in a Muddle* was a failure, *Medea; or The Best of Mothers with a Brute of a Husband* was Brough's most spectacular hit. It opened in July 1856, with Frederick Robson in the title role, and cast the proud ancient princess as a heroine from the contemporary lower classes. 'Robson', as Hall and Macintosh note, 'won more sympathy for Medea than any previous actor on the British stage.'[56] This was a Medea for the dispossessed. Evicted even from the workhouse, she came before the audience for the first time as a beggar:

Slow Music. – 'The Beggar's Petition.' Enter MEDEA with her two CHILDREN, one in her arms, the other by her side [. . .]. She then puts the child down, and they stand like street beggars: the smallest child having a placard on its neck inscribed –

Φα θερλεσσ
ORPHELINS
ORFANI
FATHERLESS

The other has a little tin begging-box and wallet.

MEDEA. My Grecian friends, with deep humiliation
I stand in this disgraceful situation.
Though unaccustom'd publicly to speak,
I have not tasted food since Tuesday week.
Three sets of grinders out of work you see,
Through the invention of machinery.
A landlord, as inclement as the weather,
Has seiz'd our flock bed – we were out of feather.
Shoeless and footsore, I've through many lands
Walked, with this pair of kids upon my hands.[57]

Amplified to absurdity though her woe was, this Medea's low social status and precarious position were recognized by reviewers. *The Times* called her 'the moody virago of low life',[58] while the *Illustrated London News* remarked that 'Mr Robson was the Medea of vulgar life'.[59] Medea was a woman who had been rendered destitute by her husband's abandonment of her and her family – a figure with powerful contemporary resonance.[60] Brough's Jason, cheerfully the villain of the piece, confesses to his desertion of Medea[61] – and proceeds to take her children away from her:

JASON. Our ties are o'er.

MEDEA. O – oh! I was not aware.

JASON. Why, yes, of course;
Our separation equals a divorce. [. . .]
Of course 'twould never do for boys like those

Within whose veins the blood of princes flow,
To be brought up by (no offence) a vagrant,
Given to sorcery and crimes as flagrant.
You understand me?[62]

Brough's *Medea* astonished London. The production was the talk of the city – and Londoners lined up outside the theatre, night after night, to applaud his ancient world. Revived time and again, the slight burlesque became something of a cultural touchstone – 'Robson's edition' of *Medea* even finds its way into Trollope's *Barchester Towers*.[63] Key to its triumph was Brough's remarkable leading actor, Frederick Robson, the sweet 'strange genius'[64] of the stage in 1850s London. Robson's style was always that of 'true passion, merely exaggerated by one premeditated step too far in the direction of the real (not mock) heroic.'[65]

> You saw capering about the stage, absurdly clad, now mouthing tumid bombast, now chanting some street song, a strange figure – one of the quaintest of buffoons. Nothing more? Of a sudden the actor would be in earnest; the eyes that had been winking with a knowing vulgarity all at once looked you full in the face, mastered you at a glance; there was a passionate cry, a taunting shout, or a wail of utter heartrending misery in the voice which had just been trolling a Cockney ditty; and then, ere your tears, so strangely surprised from you, were dry, the mime was again prancing.[66]

Robson was, for *The Times*, 'an artist who has invented a school of acting totally distinct from anything with which we have been familiar [. . .]. His representation of the terrible heroine of Colchis [Medea] is a great creation, to be compared with those choruses of Aristophanes.'[67]

Brough's *Medea*, then, appears to be a triumphant appropriation of classics for the dispossessed – a radical claim on the ancient world with a notable impact. But had the classics truly been claimed for the Victorian lower classes? Closely examined, the story of Brough's *Medea* reverses: it becomes one of how political ambitions – no matter how passionately held – were often stifled and frustrated; a story of the space between sincere belief and its successful articulation, of the quicksilver nature of radical classics.

In the manuscript of *Medea* which Brough submitted for approval by the Lord Chamberlain's office – necessary to obtain a licence for performance – traces can be seen of an angrier, more unsettling story. In one song, crossed through before the manuscript reached the Lord Chamberlain, society is heavily complicit in Medea's abandonment: the police stand ready to run her off, and 'a cast-off wife', as she puts it, 'is a cast-off slave'.

MEDEA: Of all the pretty scoundrels bold
With faces cast in brazen mould,
The biggest's he who just has told
He's going to marry Creusa. [. . .]
A cast-off wife is a cast-off slave. [. . .]

JASON: Take my advice, be calm and go.
Policeman Three
Of Division B
Has his eye on folks disliked by me.[68]

In the final version of the burlesque, Medea is decidedly less strident or threatening – speaking, instead, of her 'tenderness.'[69] This early draft shows Brough working to reduce the threat posed by his Medea. And his small changes start to add up: 'Making a bauble of her murderous blade' becomes 'Making a bauble of Medea's blade.'[70] Most tellingly, while the final lines of *Olympus in a Muddle* twisted the knife in Brough's aristocratic targets, the final lines of *Medea* reduce the author's voice to that of an insignificant 'gadfly' – and his radical politics to 'harmless impudence'. Ultimately, the threat of *Medea* is defused by Brough himself:

FINALE.
MEDEA AND THE CHARACTERS.
'One horse Shay.'

There was a little man,
And he made a little fun
Of a very great woman 'bove his head, head, head [. . .].
And he trusts you'll carry hence
Of his harmless impudence
No impression to your supper or your bed, bed, bed,
Save the merry chirping sound,
Of a gadfly buzzing round
The wreath upon a noble statue's head, head, head.[71]

As Medea herself laments, 'My plot destroyed – my damages made good, / They'd change my very nature if they could.'[72]

Heading to their 'supper' and their 'bed', the audience at the Olympic Theatre laughed off the evening's entertainment, just as Brough invited them to. None of the reviews of *Medea* suggest that it was a dangerous or incendiary text; no one

expected the theatregoers to march out, like those 'ungovernable youths' of Heidelberg, full of revolutionary zeal. (The Lord Chamberlain's office, likewise, was magnificently unruffled by *Medea*: no changes were demanded to Brough's text before it was licensed for performance.[73]) Given the make-up of the Olympic's audience, that is hardly surprising: in 1856, the theatre had 'become one of the most favourite resorts of the British aristocracy'[74] – far from a hotbed of radicalism. Alfred Wigan, the theatre's manager, 'had hopes of attracting the fashionable world [. . .]. Wigan [was] one of the only gentlemen of the stage, and he was tenacious of his gentility.'[75] While, of course, many different social classes were strongly represented in the audience at the Olympic, there is no doubt that Wigan cultivated the aristocracy assiduously, and had no wish to alienate them: 'Court patronage meant so much to Wigan.'[76] Brough's *Medea* was staged as a piece of 'harmless impudence' to delight the 'governing classes', as its author well knew.

Wigan permitted the semblance, but not the substance, of radicalism. On Boxing Day 1855, at one of the lowest points of the Crimean campaign, *The Discreet Princess* played at the Olympic. It seemed, like Brough's *Medea*, to have an incendiary side: 'There are topical allusions to the Crimean War, including King Gander's excuse that he was "coming home on urgent private business", a phrase rather too often used by officers asking for home leave.' But in the audience, far from squirming, those same officers hooted with laughter: 'Lord Clyde in the audience took this in good part.'[77] So it was in *Medea*: Robert Brough's radical classics had turned into little more than a punchline. How, in the space of a year, could so much have changed?

'For alms we humbly sue'

Radical claims on the classical past – and those who staked those claims – were rarely pure or simple. The voice of the outsider echoes throughout Brough's work – but he himself was not the outsider he championed. He spoke, it is true, of his time in 'a kind of back-slum suburb to the cities of literature and art';[78] his furious politics did keep him out of some of the time's most prominent journals.[79] Yet there is another side to the coin: Brough was connected to many of the leading writers and artists of the time. He was one of the founders of the Savage Club, which still endures in London. He called Dickens and Dante Gabriel Rossetti his friends. His reputation frequently preceded him – 'the Broughs and the Romers', wrote a friend, 'were the greatest Bohemians we knew'[80] – and,

though his wish to champion a more egalitarian world was unwavering, his own social positioning was complex; oscillating between insider and outsider, imprisoned debtor and brilliant friend – nothing quite so simple as an abandoned writer, waiting like his greatest heroine at the workhouse gates. One friend of his, indeed, lamented not that Brough had remained unknown, but, rather, that he had found fame too swiftly:

> The 'Brothers Brough,' to Robert's misfortune, attained immediate popularity, and, in theatrical circles, celebrity. [. . .] He had the run of the green-rooms and the literary circles, when it would have done him much more good to have had the run of a decent library, or even of a garret, a book-stall, or a coffee-shop, with some back numbers of the *Quarterly Review* on its shelves. Then he speedily found that Christmas and Easter will not come a dozen times a year, and that he could not earn a livelihood by burlesque writing.[81]

Poverty was, indeed, Brough's most dependable companion. How, he wondered in his novel *Marston Lynch*, was it possible to work when 'the coalman knocks at the door three times an hour, and the baker bullies you from his cart up to the first-floor window, and the green-grocer forces his way up-stairs, and takes a seat with his back against the door?'[82] By 1860, his health was in terminal decline. 'I hear', wrote George Augustus Sala, a friend and colleague, 'poor Bob Brough is in an awful state dying and hard [up].'[83] As his condition spiralled down, his friends tried to do what they could for his wife and children: 'With regard to poor Bob Brough, of whom I am afraid there is no hope, Shirley Brooks is trying the Literary Fund. If that fails we must try a private subscription. I have already given Mrs Brough four guineas I collected and what I could do, temporarily, myself.'[84] Both sides of Brough are on display in this letter – the threadbare circumstances of the outsider, but also the insider's dense network of friends, who stood ready to help. Brough's life, and his political positioning, were veined with such ironies and contradictions, countless small moments of accommodation – and of surrender. In 1856, blunt economic reality forced him to put his radicalism aside. He had to stop writing so stridently about victims of economic oppression, because he had become one himself. In *Medea* he can be seen weighing carefully how each word of his would play (and pay) with the 'governing classes' in Wigan's audience.

One last time, with his health slipping away, Brough tried to make his radical classics heard. In 1859, he gave a reading at the Marylebone Institution – and 'his address to the audience was not, as might have been expected, comic, but

serious'.[85] He read extracts from his poetry, and from *Medea* – and those few who were in the audience found him a revelation:

> Well do we remember one evening when, in the lecture room of the Marylebone Institution, Robert Brough read a collection of his poems to an audience so scanty, as to dispel all intentions of repeating the experiment. But singular were the beauty and force of the poems themselves – some of them wildly passionate and exquisitely pathetic; – some sportively fantastic [. . .]. But all were marked by a thorough mastery of language and of metre, and by a stern earnestness of purpose [. . .]. If ever there was a genuine poet it was Robert Brough, as he stood before that scanty audience at the Marylebone Institution. He appeared in a new character, but that character was evidently his own.[86]

His *Medea* stood revealed as it might once have been – a work 'in a new character' entirely. Even *The Times* was to remark that 'in another age, he [Brough] might have taken a high position as a writer of even serious verse'.[87] 'In another age', that is to say, *The Times* might have taken Robert Brough seriously. But, other than on that day, few ever saw the 'serious' edge hidden behind Brough's burlesque. Frederick Robson took over management of the Olympic Theatre from Wigan in 1857, and in the years that followed he produced *Medea* several times, to the delight of London.[88] But Brough's 'moody virago' was tamed still more effectively by these later revivals: in a rehearsal copy of *Medea*, dating from Robson's period as manager of the Olympic (the front cover is marked 'Please return to Mr. J. Robson'),[89] much of the remaining radicalism is edited out of the script. Jason is no longer very much to blame for deserting his wife: his song about abandoning Medea is drastically shortened, and the lines which make him most culpable are cut. The bitter fury of the abandoned wife likewise fades away: where Medea, enraged and plotting against Jason's new bride, sang 'Guerra! Guerra!' in the original edition, the song is changed to another character singing 'Spare her! Spare her!' (Figure 5.1). Medea's anger, and its cause, are made safe. 'My plot destroyed', indeed.

It is, of course, far from uncommon for the political agenda of a text to become lost in performance. Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* (1928), co-written with Elisabeth Hauptmann to Kurt Weill's score, was written as a searing indictment of bourgeois capitalism – yet bourgeois capitalists flocked to it, and cheered its condemnation of all they stood for.[91] But something more than this is at work in Brough's *Medea*. The Olympic's management, the censor's lurking presence, the demands of his audience – but, most of all, the need to feed his family and

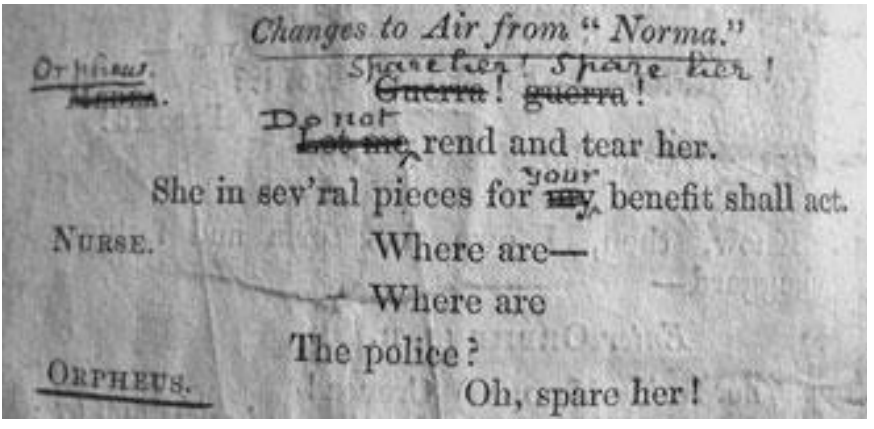

Figure 5.1 'Where radical classics used to be: Medea, diluted.'[90]

himself – led Robert Brough to defuse the threat posed by his working-class classics. Far from a call for reform – 'the right man in the right place' – *Medea* became an evening of 'harmless impudence'. The 'governing classes' jostled in the streets to see it: 'On four or five nights in every week during the season, Drury Lane is rendered well nigh impassable by splendid equipages which have conveyed dukes and marquises and members of Parliament to the Olympic.'[92] Their laughter drowned out all else. However greatly he may have wished to silence them, Brough did little to disturb their sleep.

'Lowlife' classics does not necessarily translate into classics for the working classes. A ragged Medea may have little comfort for those in rags themselves. Few works on the nineteenth-century stage could afford to target one social class above all – or to create an uncompromising working-class classics: theatres were too difficult to fill, productions too expensive and the likelihood of being taken seriously too slim. Critics were inclined not to write of the politics of the burlesque-stage, but to feature it – on a semi-annual basis – in articles on 'the "Decline of the Drama" [...] [which] happens to be in fashion for the moment – just as were General Tom Thumb, the Hippopotamus, and the Talking Fish'.[93] A theatre manager might commission a burlesque from Brough after he 'had tried in succession elephants, jugglers, "real water," and cavalry spectacles, but had reaped little by such experiments beyond harvests of abuse in the newspapers'.[94] The fickleness of theatre management and public taste – what Brough called 'the Big Baby Society'[95] – drove works into obscurity as easily as into prominence; even when established as a writer, Brough never knew when

he might next find success. On stage, business often trumped belief; radicalism yielded to pseudo-radicalism.

Of course, as other chapters in this volume explore, the ancient world played a key part in many texts created for the working classes. However, 'lowlife' classics could also be, and often was, a pose – a fraying, harlequin history, created to delight 'sharp little boys' who knew their Latin, not hungry little boys who swept the streets. So it was in Francis Burnand's drawing-room burlesque, *Harlequin Julius Caesar*:

> SCHOOLMASTER *(astonished)*. Quis? quae? quod? *(Sharp little boys among the audience may correct the schoolmaster's mistake, and ask their papa for a bottle of champagne as a reward. We wish they may get it.)*
> CLOWN *(to Pantaloon)*. Why don't you answer him?
> PANTALOON *(vacantly)*. I'd rather not.
> SCHOOLMASTER *(eyeing Pantaloon majestically)*. Amo, amas.
> CLOWN *(cutting in cheerfully)*. You love a lass. I know, Governor; but you're getting rather old for that. [. . .]
>
> *Clown and Pantaloon seize Schoolmaster, and insert him, feet foremost, in the sack. Schoolmaster struggles and cries for help. They drag him to the window and lift him up.*
>
> CLOWN *(shouting as if to someone below)*. Hi! you, down there! Do you want something nice to eat?
> VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. No.
> CLOWN. Well, then, take this. *(Lifts him up, carries him to the side-scenes, struggling and shouting all the time, then pretends to throw him out. If there's a false window, he may put him through it: noise heard as of fall, and shout –)*
> 'There's some education for the lower classes.'[96]

'Education for the lower classes' is a punch-line: like the 'Cockney'[97] who presumes to rewrite Euripides, it is a joke Burnand's readers are invited to share (for surely, the text assumes, you readers who know your Latin could not be from 'the lower classes'?).

Many in Victorian Britain used classics to talk about class – Robert Brough's voice is simply one of the loudest and the most passionate. But how many were able to use classics to do something about class? Did working-class classics ever truly drive political reform – or present a serious threat to the established elite? In 1856, the choice which Brough had to make was a stark one: write incendiary

verses which would sit unsold, or watch the 'governing classes' of Britain laugh at his 'harmless impudence'. He chose to make his 'betters' laugh. How many more did the same? How many times was seemingly-radical classics anything other than 'harmless impudence'? Despite Brough's passionate beliefs, this question must now be an open one.

Brough's chaotic lifestyle – and his confinement in the debtors' prison – did his health no good;[98] 'indeed, for a long period, those nearest and dearest to him had known that the most that could be done for him was to soothe and cherish him to the end.'[99] He died very young, in 1860, at the age of 32. 'It will be long before we meet with so brilliant a genius and so unhappy a man', wrote the *New York Times*. 'With a wife and family to support and his constant illness to contend with, he had been unable to make much fight in his great battle of life, and he died almost penniless. His friends have taken up the cause of those left behind him, and have organized a public subscription and a dramatic and musical entertainment in their behalf.'[100] On 25 July 1860, 'at Drury-lane Theatre, for the benefit of the widow and children'[101] of Robert Brough, this performance took place.

At the end of the evening, Sala, Brough's friend and colleague, delivered his tribute from the stage – a poem written for the occasion. Infused with the ancient world, it was a strange and bitter epitaph: Sala's Brough was no triumphant 'Caesar', but an anonymous soldier, who fought and was forgotten. 'His valour help'd to swell / The glorious triumphs Caesar bears so well. / Now his cold corse in some dark trench is laid.'[102] The classical analogy, far from granting Brough power and remembrance, took them away from him. But for that 'ardent hater' who never saw an aristocrat he did not yearn to topple, Sala's final lines would have been the deepest betrayal. Desperate to provide for Brough's widow and children, Sala looked out to the wealthy audience, took a deep breath, and begged:

> He [Brough] never crav'd the bounty of my lord.
> We crave it now. For alms we humbly sue;
> We hinge the knee, we bow the head, to you.
> We ask your charity.[103]

After all the hope, all the anger, all the plans, all the defeats, after Medea and Jason, Nero and Coriolanus, and all the gods of Olympus, it had come to this. Robert Brough was remembered through the ancient world – as helpless subject for 'the bounty of my lord'. Here at the end of his radicalism, with an old friend

sweeping away the last of his revolutionary self, Brough should have the last word – for few have known so deeply as he the illusory power of antiquity:

> For freedom oft I pray'd;
> Invoking Rome's and Athens' names [. . .].
> O, set your mind at ease, my love;
> I'll speak of them no more.[104]

6

Making it Really New

Dickens versus the Classics

Edith Hall

> *The present splendid brotherhood of fiction-writers in England, whose graphic and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together, have described every section of the middle class from the 'highly genteel' annuitant and fund-holder who looks upon all sorts of business as vulgar, to the little shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk. And how have Dickens and Thackeray, Miss Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell painted them? As full of presumption, affectation, petty tyranny and ignorance; and the civilised world have confirmed their verdict with the damning epigram that it has fixed to this class that 'they are servile to those above, and tyrannical to those beneath them'.*

Thus thundered Karl Marx in *The New York Tribune* on 1 August 1854,[1] recognizing the crucial role the British writers of realist fiction played in exposing the worst aspects of industrial capitalism. Heading his roll of honour is Charles Dickens, 'the first great urban novelist in England' and 'one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social and moral abuses in the Victorian era.'[2] Marx's admiration for Dickens' reformist power was well founded. Scarred forever by his childhood misery when his father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea Debtors' Prison under the Insolvent Debtors Act of 1813, required to work at the age of twelve in a shoe-blacking factory, Dickens transformed his deep empathy with the poor and disadvantaged into scintillating storytelling. His extraordinarily popular novels helped to change attitudes to class, poverty, crime, housing, child employment and education; they were, at least indirectly, instrumental in the passing of several pieces of reformist legislation. Dickens himself wrote to

another novelist, Wilkie Collins, four years after Marx's accolade, that he felt a strong personal commitment to society and its improvement: 'Everything that happens [. . .] shows beyond mistake that you can't shut out the world; that you are in it, to be of it; that you get yourself into a false position the moment you try to sever yourself from it; that you must mingle with it, and make the best of it, and make the best of yourself into the bargain.'[3] And Arnold Kettle showed, in a famous study, how Dickens's own understanding of capitalism, or at least of how as an economic system it created inhumane social conditions, steadily increased over his writing career, the more he 'mingled' with the world.[4]

Mingling with the world in order to make the best of it: in his novels Dickens described the class-conflicted world of late Georgian and early Victorian society in the way he had experienced it, and at this time the ancient Greeks and Romans were deeply implicated in the class struggle. Romantics and revolutionaries had taken inspiration from the rebellious gods and heroes of classical antiquity – Prometheus, Spartacus, Brutus, the Gracchi;[5] Dickens is satirizing such radical appropriations of classics when he makes Slackbridge, one of the trade union organizers in *Hard Times* (1854), drop classical names into his inflammatory oratory in book 2 ch. 4, 'Men and Brothers':

> Then Slackbridge, who had kept his oratorical arm extended during the going out, as if he were repressing with infinite solicitude and by a wonderful moral power the vehement passions of the multitude, applied himself to raising their spirits. Had not the Roman Brutus, oh, my British countrymen, condemned his son to death; and had not the Spartan mothers, oh my soon to be victorious friends, driven their flying children on the points of their enemies' swords? Then was it not the sacred duty of the men of Coketown, with forefathers before them, an admiring world in company with them, and a posterity to come after them, to hurl out traitors from the tents they had pitched in a sacred and a God-like cause? The winds of heaven answered Yes; and bore Yes, east, west, north, and south. And consequently three cheers for the United Aggregate Tribunal![6]

Despite Dickens's sympathy with the factory workers of Coketown, there is a bitter satire in his imputing to Slackbridge a reference not to Brutus' foundation of the Roman Republic but to his brutal act of filicide, and in the firebrand's obvious confusion about Spartan maternal heroism. Yet, at the same time, Dickens was all too aware that the upper and aspiring middle classes were using classical education to create barriers between their sons and those of factory workers, and to shore up class snobbery in both public and private life.

Dickens was, of course, far from the only novelist of his time to express his disapproval of the contemporary classical curriculum. A searing indictment of the conventional adulation of antiquity by the aspiring classes is put by Thackeray in the mouth of M. A. Titmarsh, describing a journey to Athens. Titmarsh regards the ten years of Classics he endured as 'ten years' banishment of infernal misery, tyranny, arrogance'. In Attica Titmarsh was visited by the Greek muse, and explains that he could not effect any reconciliation with her because he read her poets 'in fear and trembling; and a cold sweat is but an ill accompaniment to poetry'. Ancient History was 'so dull . . . that when the brutal dulness of a schoolmaster is superadded to her own slow conversation, the union becomes intolerable'. People only 'say they are enthusiastic about the Greek and Roman authors and history, because it is considered proper and respectable'.[7]

Dickens, however, was more sensitive than Thackeray to the role of classics in social exclusion, and his allusions to classical authors and episodes, although relatively rare, often use irony in order to expose classically informed snobbery. This will be one theme in this chapter. Another will be his exposure of the abusive forms that classical education often took in schools at the time, where grammar, rote learning and corporal punishment inculcated in boys and youths, even of the upper and relatively privileged middle classes, an incurable hatred of everything to do with the Greek and Latin languages: educational reform, in Dickens's view, was entangled with the question of the very desirability of the classical curriculum, at least as it was taught in his day.

Yet Dickens's stance on classics is complicated. My examination of the nature of the classical presences in Dickens's works therefore leads into a consideration of his own aesthetic project: his desire for social reform is analogous with his project of reforming fiction, of creating a new form of literary prose that responded to the ever-changing world of the Industrial Revolution all around it, rather than to the inherited literary canon fundamentally based on classical notions of rhetorical structure, genre, balance, appropriateness and literariness of language. Dickens's struggle to push at the frontiers of possibility in the language of prose fiction entailed replacing the idiolects of Enlightenment and Romantic classicism with an acute sensitivity to the languages and soundscapes of the newly industrialized nineteenth-century reality. This agenda in the realm of literary form, I argue, corresponds at a profound level with his moral and social objective, which was to make people draw their own conclusions from looking hard at the new dystopia around them and paying attention to their own emotional responses to the prevalent squalor, hypocrisy and hardship.

During the alterations to Dombey House in *Dombey and Son* (1848), which herald the imminent wedding of Mr Dombey and the arrival of the beautiful second Mrs Dombey as the new mistress of the house, Dickens describes the young Florence Dombey's amazement at the sight of the workmen on the internal scaffolding:

> The staircase was a labyrinth of posts and planks like the outside of the house, and a whole Olympus of plumbers and glaziers was reclining in various attitudes, on the skylight.[8]

These workmen are compared with the reclining gods on the East Pediment of the Parthenon, part of the 'Elgin Marbles', sculptures acquired in Athens by Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, between 1801 and 1805, and presented by Parliament to the British Museum. In 1832, the elegant new 'Elgin Room' on the west side of the museum had been opened to much public fanfare, and many of Dickens's readers will have seen either the marbles or drawings of them in periodicals and encyclopaedias. But Dickens's image replaces the elegant gods of Olympus with early Victorian working men.

This is in some ways an atypical Dickensian classical reference, because it is positive about both the ancient artefact and the individual whose subjectivity is being explored. It asks the reader to remember the beauty of the ancient sculptures. Unlike the standard, even clichéd idealization of classical Greek statuary and art in the literature of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, aesthetic beauty is hardly ever the point of comparison when Dickens refers to ancient Greece or Rome. But its role here is, indeed, to help the reader understand the pleasing visual experience of a virtuous character – Florence Dombey – who is portrayed most sympathetically throughout the novel. Many of Dickens's classical allusions make an acerbic point about the character with whom they are associated, as we shall see. It is interesting that Florence's dog, Diogenes, named for the founder of the ancient school of Cynic philosophy, functions as a consistent moral presence, capable of sniffing out individuals whose characters are marred by hypocrisy and malice, and offering Florence the only straightforward, wholehearted and unconditional love she has experienced.

From other perspectives, however, the comparison with the Parthenon pediment is, indeed, typical of Dickens's overt classical references. First, it democratizes an ancient artefact by making a claim that contemporary working people are equally fit as subjects for art – whether sculpture or prose fiction – as ancient divinities. We are asked to imagine the plumbers and glaziers as beautiful

ancient gods, with muscular bodies developed in the athletic pursuits of the leisured class, taking their ease at a festival where they are honoured by the temple-visiting public. The comparison is a perfect example of what G. K. Chesterton called Dickens's 'democratic reality', which supports equality by insisting on 'the interest and variety of all men.'[9] In this democratic aspect of 'the interest and variety of all men', there is, of course, no democrat as great as Dickens. Second, Florence's father, Paul Dombey senior, is precisely the kind of aspirational nouveau riche who would enthuse over the 'Elgin' marbles and Grecian taste. As Jenkyns writes, for the Victorians, 'Grecian culture easily became a symbol of social or cultural pretentiousness'.[10] Yet the Olympus comparison and Diogenes the dog are slim pickings for a novel of the length and substance of *Dombey and Son*: it contains few other allusions to either Greece or Rome (most of them are mentioned later in this chapter). We must not overstate the rather sparse Dickensian evidence for even ironic references to the study and cultivation of Mediterranean antiquity.

Dickens has been a bestseller for over a century and a half, beaten into third place among popular classics only by the Bible and Shakespeare.[11] His impact on culture has been inestimable: he almost single-handedly created the Victorians' own mental pictures – which we have inherited – of urban life, London, prisons, schools, childhood and Christmas. His cultural presence may not be ignored by anyone seeking to write about nineteenth-century English-speaking fiction, literature or theatre. Nor may the scholar of the nineteenth-century reception of Greek and Roman classic underplay his significance. The issue becomes more pressing on account of the massive importance of ancient Greece and Rome to other major nineteenth-century novelists such as Thackeray, Eliot and Hardy, as also to other novelists of Dickens's era who enjoyed outstanding popularity in their own time, especially Bulwer (later Bulwer-Lytton), above all through his 1834 bestseller *The Last Days of Pompeii*.[12]

Moreover, Dickens's avoidance of classical material does look deliberate. He was theatre-mad, and we know he frequently attended spectacles, plays and burlesques on classical themes. It is not easy to specify, from the available evidence, his reasons for liking some and loathing others. For example, when he saw the famed horseman, strongman and exponent of artistic tableaux Andrew Ducrow adopt various 'classic poses' at the reopening of the Colosseum in 1835, including his famous 'Brutus condemning his son to death', Dickens was appalled.[13] His revulsion may have been caused by the unpalatable content of the story (a father incapable of empathy with his son), the French Republican neoclassical associations of the patriotic tale, or just the extravagant heroic

pantomimic idiom in which Ducrow specialized. It certainly was not the simple adoption of a classical story to a popular art form, because Dickens thoroughly enjoyed the best of the classical burlesques, including Frank Talfourd's witty, Ovidian *Atalanta, or the Three Golden Apples, an Original Classical Extravaganza* (Haymarket 1857); he savoured Frederick Robson's emotive performance in the role of Medea in Brough's dazzling burlesque *The Best of Mothers, with a Brute of a Husband* (1856), discussed by Richardson in the previous chapter of this volume. Dickens's personal stance on the Greek and Roman classics was connected both with his particular model of indigenous radicalism and with his conventional mid-nineteenth-century taste for theatrical farce, sentimentality and melodrama. He wrote with some glee to Bulwer-Lytton in 1867 that the public of their day could only be induced to go and see a Greek play in the form of burlesque: moreover, 'a Greek name and breakdown nigger-dance [the (to us shocking) term for a type of musical frolic characteristic of the mid-nineteenth-century popular burlesque theatre] have become inseparable'.[14] Dickens tolerated some of the more affecting contemporary plays set in antiquity, including John Oxenford's Roman tragedy *Virginia*, based on Livy's tale of Appius Claudius, at the Royal Marylebone theatre in May 1849, especially the scenic effect of the Roman forum. But even his mildly approving response to this classicizing drama contrasts powerfully with his far greater enthusiasm for Douglas Jerrold's tale of contemporary working-class tribulations, *Black-Eyed Susan*.[15]

Clarity about Dickens's views of classical stories as retold in the theatre is made harder to achieve because he was absent from London throughout the first half of 1845, when the 'Mendelssohn' *Antigone* – a spectacular performance of an English translation of the Sophoclean play, with music by the outstandingly popular Continental composer – made such a huge impact at Covent Garden. This production, and the familiarity with Sophocles' heroine it encouraged, demonstrably informed works by Thackeray, Eliot, Bulwer and Elizabeth Barrett; Dickens would certainly have seen the production had he not been in Italy at the time.[16] One of the reasons why Dickens did not like reusing *some* classical material was that (as is clear from his editing of other people's stories) in literature he loathed excessively emotional females and amoral adventuresses of the type which is to be found in abundance in Greek and Roman authors. But the virginal, god-fearing Antigone is another matter. We can speculate on a possible connection between Antigone and Louisa Bounderby (née Gradgrind) in *Hard Times* (1854), who sacrifices herself for her brother and spends the whole novel trying to be heard by her Creon-like and emotion-despising

Utilitarian father. Another virtuous Greek tragic heroine who, I have sometimes thought, makes an appearance in Dickens is the dying queen in Euripides' *Alcestis* (in the nineteenth century one of the most famous of Greek tragedies through its adaptation into operas). Florence Dombey weeps over her dying mother at the opening of *Dombey and Son*, unaware as yet that she will be faced with an unsatisfactory stepmother, just as Alcestis fears her little girl will be persecuted (Euripides, *Alcestis* 309–19).

But both these parallels between Dickensian and Greek tragedic heroines are speculative. There is just one possible Dickensian reaction to a classical text, as experienced through the theatre, where there is at least a little documentation. 1837 was a momentous year for Dickens. His first child, Charles, was born on 6 January. In May he was driven nearly to despair by the death of his wife's sister, with whom he had a seriously ambiguous relationship. But in April he had moved to 48 Doughty St, London, just a block or two from the Foundling Hospital, and this made a huge impact upon him: he used to watch the orphan children lining up against the wall.[17] There may be another 'foundling' connection. Dickens attended the premiere of the *Ion* by Thomas Talfourd in May 1836, and it was during the immediately subsequent months that Dickens's shift to the novelistic type of the foundling *Bildungsroman* began with *Oliver Twist*, which started to appear in serialized form in 1837. This new interest developed into the fatherless young man outmanoeuvring a dastardly elder male in *Nicholas Nickleby* (serialization of which commenced in 1838), although the most autobiographical of them all, *David Copperfield*, had to wait until 1849. Before *Oliver Twist*, Dickens's principal work, besides his *Sketches*, had been *The Pickwick Papers*. There were few signs in this genre of writing that the emotive story of a child, from babyhood to rediscovery of his true identity and birthright, would become the shape taken by what have become his most famous books.

Thomas Talfourd, radical Whig MP and judge, was seventeen years older than Dickens and an established figure on both the literary and the political scene. His adaptation of Euripides' *Ion*, which also uses material from the other ancient Greek foundling tragedy, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, was a popular hit at Covent Garden in 1836. Talfourd's *Ion* tells the tale of a virtuous youth in an ancient Greek city state who sacrifices love and life to help his fellow-citizens rid themselves of a vicious tyrant and found an idealized, peaceful republic. Despite its high-minded politics, *Ion* is warm, emotional and stirring, and made excellent theatre. Talfourd sent Dickens a private copy, which Dickens wrote he would 'always be more proud of, and value more highly, than any book I possess'.[18] Dickens was also a close friend of its star, the actor Macready, and genuinely seems to have admired

both *Ion* and Talfourd's other Greek foundling play using both *Ion* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *The Athenian Captive*, a vehicle for Macready in 1838.[19] Dickens wrote with great enthusiasm to John Forster that he had heard a reading of *The Athenian Captive*, 'which, as an acting piece, I think admirable; I am as much surprised as you to imagine by what mental process such a very striking and complete thing can have been forged in so short a time'.[20] The philhellene Talfourd and the innovation-loving Dickens seem to have shared a special bond at this time: Talfourd dedicated a sonnet to Dickens, written on Christmas Day 1838, entitled 'On perusing the completed *Oliver Twist*'.[21]

Dickens had dedicated *The Pickwick Papers* to Talfourd, and he named the secondary couple in *Nicholas Nickleby* after Talfourd's children. He formed the adorable character of the well-meaning lawyer Tommy Traddles and his pious wife in *David Copperfield* upon Talfourd and his dissenting wife Rachel. Although no close parallels can be pressed between Talfourd's *Ion* and *Oliver Twist* or *Nicholas Nickleby*, I see no reason why the basic plot shape and overriding youthful subjectivity of these orphan novels should not owe something to Dickens's experience of Talfourd's play, especially its combination of social propaganda with a personal rite-of-passage, rags-to-riches structure featuring an initially ingénu and always virtuous hero. We know how much Macready's performances in other roles, especially those of Shakespeare, affected Dickens. Macready's Lear of 1838 informed the delineation of Little Nell's grandfather, and his heartbreak at her death, in *The Old Curiosity Shop* of 1840, and also *Dombey and Son*. His Hamlet affected *David Copperfield*, and his Macbeth *Bleak House*.[22] Dickens's change from social satire in the form of artfully arranged individual sketches, or those arranged around a theme like the Pickwick Club, may, therefore, have been partly inspired by the success of Talfourd's *Ion*. Such a response to a performance based on an ancient text, however, would scarcely constitute an instance of Dickens deliberately using the classics. But it *would* constitute an instance of him responding to a powerful, indeed melodramatic, stage play with a sympathetic foundling hero and a socially reformist agenda. He liked *Ion*, I believe, *in spite* of its ancient Greek credentials. He would almost certainly have preferred the play to have been given a new, more up-to-date setting: he advised Bulwer to transfer the setting of his *The Captives*, an adaptation of Plautus' comedy by that name, from ancient Greece to more recent Russia.[23]

Leaving aside the possible implicit influence of fundamental plot-types, what sort of work is done by Dickens's explicit classical allusions? An article by Pauline Fletcher proposes that there is a discernible development in Dickens's

use of classical references.[24] She argues that, in his earlier books, the treatment of Greek and Latin material is oppositional and parodic and almost always in the spirit of denigration of both the classics *and* the individual or attitude under scrutiny. In particular, in *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), Mrs Hominy, the horrendously self-important literary lady, is referred to as 'the Mother of the modern Gracchi' and wears a 'classical cap'.[25] Fletcher argues, however, that Dickens's references gradually become less parodic and less oppositional over his writing career, as his own relationship with the dominant culture evolved.

Now, in the earlier books it is true that classical allusions of any explicit kind tend to be in the mouths of, or in relation to, pedants and/or social aspirants. The best example is Alfred Jingle, the charlatan actor with pretensions to gentility in *The Pickwick Papers*. But I am not sure that Fletcher lends enough weight to the places in which they occur in *all* his books – they almost invariably mark a contrast between views of *class* at a moment when class identity is being formulated, challenged or asserted. Throughout chapter 21 of *Dombey and Son*, the sight of Edith Dombey's affected, hypochondriac seventy-year-old mother, who languishes regally in a wheelchair she does not need and declares herself too pure at heart for urban life, is consistently described as an absurd parody of Cleopatra in her galley. In *Our Mutual Friend* the bride's aunt at a fashionable wedding – exactly the sort of venue where class distinctions are publicly fine-tuned – is compared to Medusa 'in a stony cap, glaring petrifaction at her fellow-creatures'.[26] In *Hard Times* the self-styled aristocrat fallen on hard times, Mrs Sparsit, has a 'Coriolanian style of nose', a 'classical countenance', and looks as though she is invoking 'the infernal gods'.[27]

In *David Copperfield* (1850), in which the hero's talent at Latin may reflect Dickens's own childhood experiences (see below), the pawnbroker to whom the boy takes Mr Micawber's possessions used to get him 'to decline a Latin noun or adjective, or to conjugate a Latin verb', since the presence of the 'little gent' was a novelty.[28] The most famous example of all occurs in chapter 17 during one of David's encounters with Uriah Heep, as illustrated in Figure 6.1 by Fred Barnard (1870). In the complex class politics of this novel, the envious Uriah sees David as a privileged young snob. Heep is studying law in order to try to better his income and social position. Without knowledge of Latin, the mark of an educated gentleman and much used in legal discourse, it is difficult for him to achieve his dreams of self-improvement. David offers to teach him Latin. Heep refuses:

> 'Oh, thank you, Master Copperfield,' he answered, shaking his head. 'I am sure it's very kind of you to make the offer, but I am much too umble to accept it.'
>
> 'What nonsense, Uriah!'
>
> 'Oh, indeed you must excuse me, Master Copperfield! I am greatly obliged, and I should like it of all things, I assure you; but I am far too umble. There are people enough to tread upon me in my lowly state, without my doing outrage to their feelings by possessing learning. Learning ain't for me. A person like myself had better not aspire. If he is to get on in life, he must get on umbly, Master Copperfield!'[29]

To sum up our findings so far: Dickens *may* have used classical myth occasionally at a structural level, as mediated through an exciting theatrical performance, in writing a human story. He *certainly* uses classical references occasionally in order to define individuals' class positions and class aspirations. But the classics remain virtually invisible in Dickens relative to other prominent fiction writers of his time, just as they are virtually invisible in the drama of his reformist friend Douglas Jerrold. So what we need to do is try to explain the reasons for this.

One reason that has been proposed is Dickens's own education. His schooling was interrupted and he did not go to university. He did not get the chance to

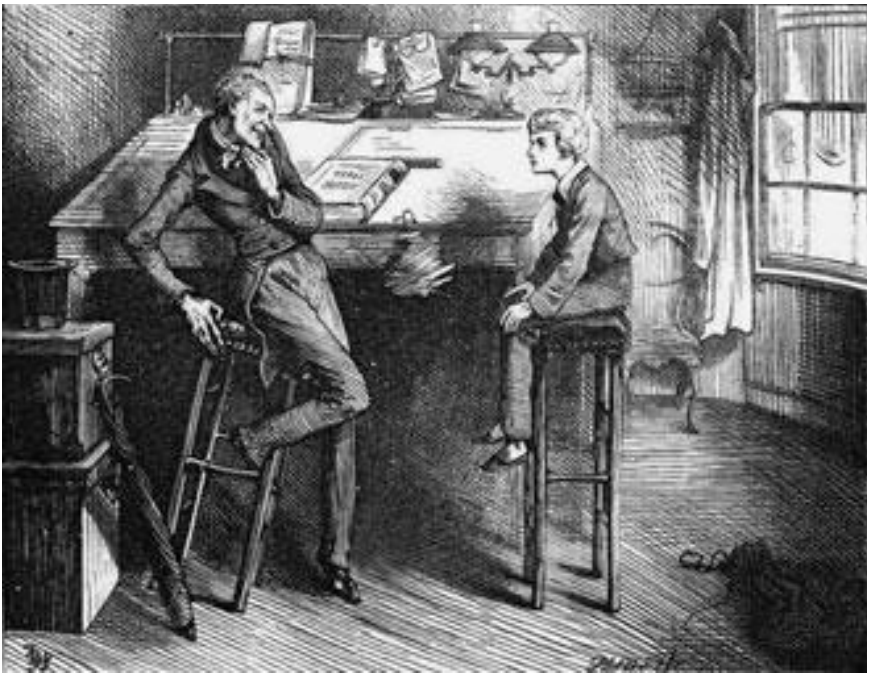

Figure 6.1 'David Copperfield and Uriah Heep'.

learn Greek. But this will not do as an explanation: he was taught the rudiments of Latin by his mother when at Chatham, where he lived from the age of five. He learned more at William Giles's school at Chatham,[30] and later, at Wellington House Academy, on the Hampstead Road, London, which he attended for two years in his teens, he actually won the Latin Prize.[31] This was unusual because the prize was almost always given, cynically, to boys with younger brothers who were prospective pupils. But Dickens had forged an intense relationship with the Latin teacher, Mr Shier, who coached him for the prize; he even gave Shiers a copy of the works of Horace to thank him.[32] The idea, sometimes suggested, that there were no avenues by which Dickens could have accessed the classics is, therefore, simply not tenable. New avenues of access opened up in his adulthood. He became close friends with Cornelius Felton, Professor of Greek at Harvard (1832–60), during his first visit to America in 1842. He thereafter consulted Virgil in the original, and read several other ancient authors, including Plutarch, Cicero, and Horace. He had translations of Greek tragedy in his library and had read Daniel Burgess's 1729 study, *A Short Account of the Roman Senate*.[33] He was a tourist at classical sites, learning a great deal in Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum;[34] he was probably the author and certainly the commissioner of an article entitled 'Trèves, the Belgic Rome', on the Roman ruins in the Rhineland, which he published in the English periodical he edited, *Bentley's Miscellany*.[35]

When it is appropriate to the subject matter, as in his *Pictures from Italy*, the travelogue arising from his extended vacation in 1844–5, Dickens competently discusses Horace, Tiberius, Septimius Severus, Constantine and the Etruscans, demonstrates the detail in which he has read Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*, and describes his responses to the murals of Pompeii and Herculaneum.[36] His control of ancient sources does also, occasionally, surface in his fiction. There is a subtle comparison between Odysseus and Florence's patient admirer Walter Gay, which evolves during *Dombey and Son*. Despite being shipwrecked on his way to Barbados, Gay survives to win the hand of his woman despite the machinations of his dastardly rival Cawker. In one of Dickens's most sophisticated novels, *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–5), there are signs of an experiment in using ancient history to illuminate a transhistorical vision of the rise – and inevitable fall – of societies based on empty values. Boffin, the plutocrat and parvenu whose entire life revolves around the accumulation of money, is studying what else but Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.[37]

Angus Wilson patronizingly suggests, of Dickens's studies at Wellington House, that 'their mediocre level is suggested by the triteness of Dickens's classical references'.[38] But the idea that he was either too ignorant or too insecure to draw

on more than a limited range is to underestimate the man. He was a voracious reader quite capable of devouring any ancient author he wished in translation, at any time. The more usual proposal is that Dickens was polemically *opposed* to study of the classics. It has been suggested that his true attitude can be heard in the addition he made, during his public readings of *Nicholas Nickleby*, to the schoolmaster Squeers's explanation of the meaning of the word *quadruped*. In the text, he tells the pupils to whom he teaches English spelling and philosophy that a horse is 'a quadruped; and quadruped's Latin'. But in the performance version, Dickens added to this speech of Squeers a denunciation of training in the ancient tongues 'or Greek, or Hebrew, or some other language that's dead and deserves to be'.[39] Yet, if he really believed that the study of Latin and Greek was obsolete, why did he send his own oldest son to the 'public school', Eton? What Dickens really objected to was the sort of education handed out in abysmal minor *private* schools (on the distinction between these two types of institution, see further Stray's chapter in this volume). There are more schools in Dickens's novels – fifty – than in those of any other nineteenth-century novelist, and more than that number of teachers.[40] And it is true that he was violently opposed to grammar and flogging as a substitute for a liberal education in a humane environment.

In 1825, he enrolled at Wellington House Classical and Commercial Academy, run by the brutal William Jones, who meted out terrible scourgings. Although Dickens himself, as a day boy, personally avoided such torture, he was traumatized by what he witnessed. This regime informed his depiction of Dotheboy's Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dr Blimber's in *Dombey and Son*, and Salem House in *David Copperfield*: Mr Creakle is directly modelled on Jones, whose business, Dickens still angrily recalled more than three decades later, was 'to make as much out of us and put as little into us as possible.'[41] More extreme resurrections of the vile Mr Jones appear in two of Dickens's shorter stories. First is the vicious headmaster in 'Our School' (1851). The Headmaster (known as 'The Chief') is said to enjoy ruling ciphering-books and 'smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument'.[42] But the most colourful example occurs in the fantasy of Robin Redforth (aged nine), the narrator of part III of Charles Dickens's 1868 novella *Holiday Romance*. The hero of this fantasy is a pirate named Captain Boldheart, who embraced his criminal career out of loathing for the Latin master who had 'spited' him. In the China seas, Boldheart encounters a ship flying the flag of ancient Rome, and it turns out that its captain is the Latin master. Boldheart orders his men 'that the Latin-grammar master should be taken alive', and then defeats him in 'a terrific cannonading'. The Latin master is then punished for his perfidy and spite against little boys by being cast adrift in a small boat

with a few provisions and a Latin grammar. Later, the master is about to be cooked by wildly dancing 'savages' on an island. He is being coated with flour and has had his head shaved. Boldheart rescues him, but only on condition that 'he should never, under any circumstances, presume to teach any boy anything any more', and that he would spend the rest of his life voluntarily helping boys with their Latin exercises.[43]

Incompetent and even sadistic teachers of the ancient languages like these feature regularly in Dickens's many lousy educational establishments, since bad teaching of Latin had become, for him, a *symbol* of bad education. But the only *novel* in which Dickens specifically attacks the coercion of children into classical pursuits is *Dombey and Son*, in the first chapter, through the portrait of a woman, the übersnob Cornelia Blimber; she loved dead languages, which she would dig up 'like a ghoul', and worshipped Cicero.[44] In *David Copperfield*, on the other hand, Dr Strong the lexicographer is a brilliant scholar, and pathetic rather than malevolent. Even in the semi-autobiographical *Our School*, the real problem is not the scholarly Latin teacher himself but the vicious headmaster.

A third theory is that Dickens's class consciousness and sympathy with marginalized groups led him deliberately to avoid classical references as elitist. It has been argued that his repudiation of the classics is a form of 'alienation' that 'offers a means of understanding the nature and mechanisms of class marginalization, the patterns of which, psychological and social, inscribe themselves on Dickens's texts.'[45] But this explanation will not do, either. Dickens was certainly insecure about his own status as a 'gentleman' and used that laden term, as statistical analysts of his prose can inform us, nearly three times as often as any other significant nineteenth-century novelist.[46] He was also committed to the creation of a populist literature accessible to all literate members of the public at large. As the first advertisement for *Household Words* put it, everything he wrote was suited to 'the entertainment and instruction of **all** classes of readers'.[47] But there is no evidence that he opposed the humane study of the classics in general, or indeed in principle, either in the original languages or in modern-language translation.

Thinking in terms of literary genealogy may be more helpful. Dickens can be understood as an heir, or at least a successor, to the Wordsworthian Romantic tradition. In his rejection of regulated neoclassicism he was in a profound sense a Romantic: besides loathing French neoclassical theatre, he claimed that he had written the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* in order to 'substitute a garland of fresh flowers for the sculptured horrors which disgrace the tomb'.[48] But he also reacted massively *against* the Romantic poets' disapproval

of technology and civilization, their cult of the noble savage, and idealization of the past as visited through travels conducted in the imagination. As he wrote to Douglas Jerrold on 3 May 1843, 'If I ever destroy myself, it will be in the bitterness of hearing those infernal and damnably good old times extolled'.[49] Classical Italy did deserve to be remembered, he thought, but not because of any virtue immanent to that civilization. The reason, rather, was that 'in every fragment of her fallen temples, and every stone of her deserted palaces and prisons, she helps to inculcate the lesson that the wheel of Time is rolling for an end, and that the world is, in all great essentials, better, gentler, more forbearing.'[50]

Fletcher concludes that Dickens's lack of classical material is because 'he always wrote from the heart rather than the intellect';[51] although there is some truth in this, it underplays how much Dickens had thought through his purpose in writing his novels. What we are dealing with is not a *rejection* of the classics as much as a positive *embrace of the future possibilities of prose fiction* – a conscious vote for progress and for making new things in literature. He did not want to 'make it new' in the sense meant by Ezra Pound,[52] who advocated reblending and selecting from previous literary styles to produce a 'new', synthetic, modernist aesthetic. Dickens wanted to make something *wholly new* in a form of permanent aesthetic revolution against the inherited plot shape or word cluster.

Getting at Dickens's own aesthetic views is notoriously difficult, since he wrote so little about them. Some of the more important statements are actually to be found in his remarks about the visual arts. Confusingly, for a man who despised neoclassicism in literature, he liked Canova, but in general he expressed fairly trenchant objections to conventionality in art and to the use of stereotyped typologies. In a letter of 1845, on the reuse of the same model by artists in Rome, Dickens deplored the fact that 'students should go on copying these people elaborately time after time out of mind, and find nothing fresh or suggestive in the actual world around them'.[53]

When it comes to literature, his recorded views even on canonical authors are not illuminating: he revered Chaucer, Shakespeare, the New Testament, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Tobias Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* and Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermore*. Richard Lettis has tried to reconstruct Dickens's aesthetic tenets from his editorial work in *Household Words* and other journalistic ventures.[54] Dickens preferred any story to possess an inherently proper length, to be realistic and probable, to use characterization to help along the action, and to restrict the story sternly to what was needed for the plot as a whole. These tenets, in a sense, could not be more classical, reproducing Aristotle's categories in the *Poetics* of *mēkos*, *eikos*, *prepon*, *hen* and *holon*. But they sit alongside a pervasive

and emphatic rejection of the trite, the ordinary, the clichéd and predictable. Dickens encouraged all his writers to strive to create new plotlines and new combinations of words. In the case of one story by Harriet Martineau, his high praise showed the three virtues he most admired: it was 'affecting', it had 'a fine plain purpose' and 'a singular novelty'. His approving reactions to Wilkie Collins's work reveal his admiration for avoidance of the obvious plot pattern and a penchant for the striking and wild against an ordinary, everyday background.[55]

In his editorial work, Dickens particularly admired fictionalizations of real human stories of the 'here and now' that he found in newspapers. Much that appears far-fetched in his *own* work can also be proven to be inspired by real-life human stories, drawn from his experience writing police reports for *The Morning Chronicle* or data extracted from the report of the Poor Law Commission or the *Second Report on Children's Employment in Mines and Factories*. I used to be tempted to see a Cyclopean reference in the vile Mr Squeers, the one-eyed despotic headmaster of Dotheboys Hall, the Yorkshire School attended by Nicholas Nickleby. But this turns out to be a detail inspired by his real-life prototype, a schoolmaster named William Shaw, who was really one-eyed and had been put on trial for gross neglect of the boys at his school in 1823.[56]

It is difficult for us to recreate a sense of how shockingly revolutionary Dickens' *style* seemed to his contemporaries.[57] Trollope disliked it intensely:

> Of Dickens's style it is impossible to speak in praise. It is jerky, ungrammatical, and created by himself in defiance of rules . . . To readers who have taught themselves to regard language, it must therefore be unpleasant.[58]

The Professor of Rhetoric at Edinburgh, W. E. Aytoun, published a disguised satirical attack on Dickens, in which he says, with faux-admiration, 'You have . . . undertaken to frame a new code of grammar and of construction for yourself; and the light and airy effect of this happy innovation is conspicuous . . . There is no slipslop here – only a fine, manly disregard of syntax'.[59] These features – rejection of strict rules of syntax and grammar, innovation and wordiness – also appear in responses by authors more favourable to Dickens' work, such as Horne, who saw that Dickens 'continually exhibits the most trifling and commonplace things in a new and amusing light'.[60]

The main difficulty in our feeling the extreme newness of Dickens's prose style is that he contributed so much diction to the English language, besides all those proper names that have become part of everyday locution (Gradgrind, Micawber).[61] A brilliant study by Sørensen has shown that he introduced well over a thousand lexicographically demonstrable neologistic words and phrases,

including dozens that are part of everyday speech – doormat, abolitionist, an acquired taste, on the cards, casualty ward, flummox.[62] The second difficulty in hearing how innovative he was is that his adventures in style prefigure so many of the tropes usually associated with modernist fiction that we, post-Woolf and Joyce, are insensitive to the shock that they must originally have caused. The chief novelistic innovations with which he has been credited are these: (1) his experimental confusion between Free Indirect Discourse, direct speech, indirect speech and focalizations; (2) his freedom with the confusion of tenses: in *Bleak House*, for example, he experiments with the present tense in roughly half the whole book in order to represent the interminable dragging out of the lawsuit and to conjure up 'the peculiar and sinister atmosphere';[63] (3) he is happy to write non-sentences, lacking finite verbs. See, for example, 'The time, an hour short of midnight; the place, a French apartment . . .'[64] But here there is a reason for the lack of verbs, and this is that Dickens is reproducing the style of stage directions, just as he elsewhere reproduces the definite and indefinite-article-free style of newspaper headings and especially the newly invented telegraph, as in 'Venerable parent promptly resorts to anathematisation, and turns him out. Shocked and terrified boy takes flight'.[65] These three 'dialects' – stage directions, journalistic compression and 'telegraphese' – show Dickens once again anticipating the great modernists by replicating patterns of speech as they occur in the real world rather than making them all conform to a preconceived model of a correct novelistic *koinē*.[66]

It would be interesting to look for ancient equivalents – they are unlikely to be models – for other distinctively Dickensian stylistic innovations. These include the ascription of subjectivity to inanimate objects ('The wooden leg looked at him with a meditative eye'[67]), the premodification of nouns by strings of parallel attributive adjectives ('a bawling, splashing, link-lighted, umbrella-struggling, hackney-coach-jostling, patten-clinking, muddy, miserable world'[68]) and the attempt to imitate, through prose rhythm, the rhythms of the newly technologized and mechanized world around him – another profoundly Joycean trick. The most famous example is the breathtaking description of the train in *Dombey and Son*, 'away, with a shriek, and roar, and a rattle, through the fields, through the woods, through the corn, through the hay, through the heath, through the mould, through the clay, through the rock'.[69]

The argument I have been struggling to frame is about an author who wanted to forge a new kind of prose fiction, one which engaged at every level with immediate reality by listening intently to that reality rather than to inherited texts. How we talk about Dickens's relationship with classical texts

brings us into one of the most frustrating limitations on conventional aesthetic theory. An *antithesis* – a Hegelian, dialectical reaction against established tastes and norms – is just as closely indebted to its thesis as a simple-minded imitation. When abstract art reacted against figurative art, or Dadaism against nineteenth-century realism, it is easy enough to see how the antithetical, rejecting aesthetic movement retains, immanently within it, the analytical categories it opposes. But in the case of Dickens it is much easier to define what he wanted to *do* than what he *did not*.

I began by entitling this chapter 'Dickens versus the Classics', but it has become apparent to me that this is not an adequate account of the relationship between the man and the cultural property. He wanted something real, and new, far more than he wanted something that *was not old*. I think he would have agreed with e.e. cummings, who once asked why T.S. Eliot 'couldn't write his own lines instead of borrowing from dead poets.'[70] Perhaps the title 'Dickens *regardless* of the classics' would better get over what I mean. But I conclude with the profound statement on Dickens's anticlassicism of George Gissing, a classical scholar from the north of England who himself became an outstanding writer of realist fiction. It comes in Gissing's essay on *Dombey and Son*. Although he underestimates the extent of Dickens's classical education, he sees the clear link between Dickens's conscious break with hoary literary precedent and his zeal for social reform: Dickens, he says,

> had a strong prejudice against the 'classics'; their true value he was not capable of appreciating, and his common sense told him that, as used in the average middle-class school, they were worse than valueless . . . Great is the achievement of a public man who supplies his audience with the picture that abides, the catch-word unforgettable, and Dickens many a time did so. It is the picture and the catch-word, not reason or rhetoric, that effect reform.[71]

7

Classics and Social Closure

Christopher Stray

In the 1960s and 1970s a mutual disdain between classicists and sociologists was widespread in Britain. In the wake of the abolition of compulsory Latin at Oxford and Cambridge at the end of the 1950s, classical recruitment in schools was declining fast. At the same time, social science was expanding in both schools and universities. In the 1980s, however, the two subjects acquired a common cause, since they were both airbrushed from official maps of knowledge. Mrs Thatcher declared that society did not exist, and, though her attempt to abolish the Social Science Research Council was thwarted, she had it renamed the Economic and Social Research Council. Her government's National Curriculum of 1988 in effect declared that, at school level, Classics did not exist. Recently we have heard from another Conservative prime minister, David Cameron, that society both exists and is, or can be, a Big Society; and the latest plans for the school curriculum involve a pool of 'mainstream' subjects which appears to include Classics.[1]

Social closure

The issue in the current debates on curriculum is one of inclusion and exclusion, and this is the topic I want to address via the notion of social closure. This refers to the creation and maintenance of social boundaries which separate people into insiders and outsiders (which, in many cases, also means superiors and inferiors), but it can also be applied to curricular boundaries. I have chosen this focus because it is useful in looking at class divisions, while putting them in a wider context. Not all social divisions are class divisions; not all social boundaries are erected on a class basis. Marx's original analysis of class saw it as based on control of the means of production; social differences, for him, were firmly rooted in the economic realm. Since Marx's time, race, gender and religion have also been

explored as bases of social difference. The notion of social closure comes from the work of a later thinker, the German sociologist Max Weber. Weber wanted to look at status groups and elites rather than just at social classes; that is, he added to Marx's emphasis on the economic bases of social life an analysis of the role of culture. In addition, in his work he developed a picture of social structure and social change which was both historical and comparative. Here is Weber looking for a middle path between Marx's economic reductionism and a purely cultural or idealistic analysis:

> Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern conduct. Yet very frequently the worldviews that have been created by ideas have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been driven by the dynamic of interest.[2]

This is from an American translation (slightly adapted) of Weber's original German; in British English the equivalent of 'switchman' would be 'pointsman'. What is at issue is a double tension: between the economic and the cultural (material and ideal), and between determinism and freedom. The tracks are determining, the points represent choices and alternatives. Economic and material interests drive people forward, but their ideas of the world steer them forward in one direction or another. One might say that, had Marx adopted the railway metaphor, he would have envisaged a single-track route, or multiple tracks becoming one, leading to a terminus, the socialist Utopia. Points would be needed in the Marxian railway system, but for convergence rather than divergence. Weber, however, builds in the idea of alternatives, of an open future. In his rail system, one line forks into (at least) two; hence the importance of the switchman.[3] Similarly, his idea of social closure, which includes tensions between competing status groups, is more flexible and more dynamic than Marx's more monolithic economic/class analysis.

The discussion of social closure in recent decades was sparked off in the 1970s by the work of Frank Parkin, who rebelled against the dominance of stratification theory and Marxist analysis and used humour to undermine it. His 1971 book *Class Inequality and Political Order* was described by a later writer on the topic as 'a humorous and loudly sarcastic exposé of the folly of contemporary Marxian theory', and Parkin himself as 'the only comic writer in contemporary sociology': there were, admittedly, few contenders for the title.[4] Parkin distinguished between collectivist and individualist modes of closure. An example of collectivist closure would be a prohibition on males joining a group; of individualist closure, letting in only those who achieved a specified score in a test. This is clearly related

to the long-standing distinction between ascribed and achieved status, familiar to classicists in the contrast between the *nobilis* and the *novus homo* in the late Roman Republic. Here status based on inherited position is analytically contrasted with, and historically challenged by, status acquired by individual effort.

The best-known visual image of British class distinction is a photograph taken outside the Lords cricket ground in 1937 during the annual Eton–Harrow match (Figure 7.1). This image has become a cliché, but, like most clichés, has been misunderstood. The two boys on the left are not Eton nobs, as often claimed, but Harrow nobs. The three working-class boys on the right are not gazing at them with amazement or ridicule, as many have assumed: they had skipped school and hoped to make a shilling carrying bags for the nobs, as local boys commonly did, and the photographer persuaded them to move up close for his picture.[5]

One of the many stories one could extract from this image is a story of inclusion and exclusion: not about the two groups of boys, as one might think, but about Eton and Harrow. In the nineteenth century, one of the main ways in which public schools asserted their mutual solidarity was by playing each other

Figure 7.1 'Toffs and Toughs'.

at games.[6] But who would play with whom? Eton, Harrow and Winchester played no schools but each other. From the 1860s, the nine schools investigated by the Royal Commission of 1864 (the 'Clarendon Commission') were seen as the elite. But, though Westminster and Shrewsbury both belonged in this group, in 1866 an invitation to Westminster from the Shrewsbury cricket captain for a match was turned down on the grounds that 'Westminster plays no schools except public schools.'[7]

Figure 7.2 is another picture of five boys, which might convince us of the regimentation of schoolchildren except that (as some readers may remember) they are different views of the same boy, showing the claimed progress from Desperation through Pacification, Expectation and Acclamation to Realization. The product advertised, Fry's Five Boys chocolate bar, was launched in the 1880s and expired in the 1970s.[8] The Edwardian sailor suit worn by the boy in the picture is very much of its time, but over the lifetime of the chocolate bar a series of Education Acts, notably the Butler Act of 1944, increased access to secondary education. In 1902 there were 35,000 children in grammar schools; in 1932, half a million. This history of access can be illustrated by looking at yet another five boys, from successive generations of a South London family (Figure 7.3). In the

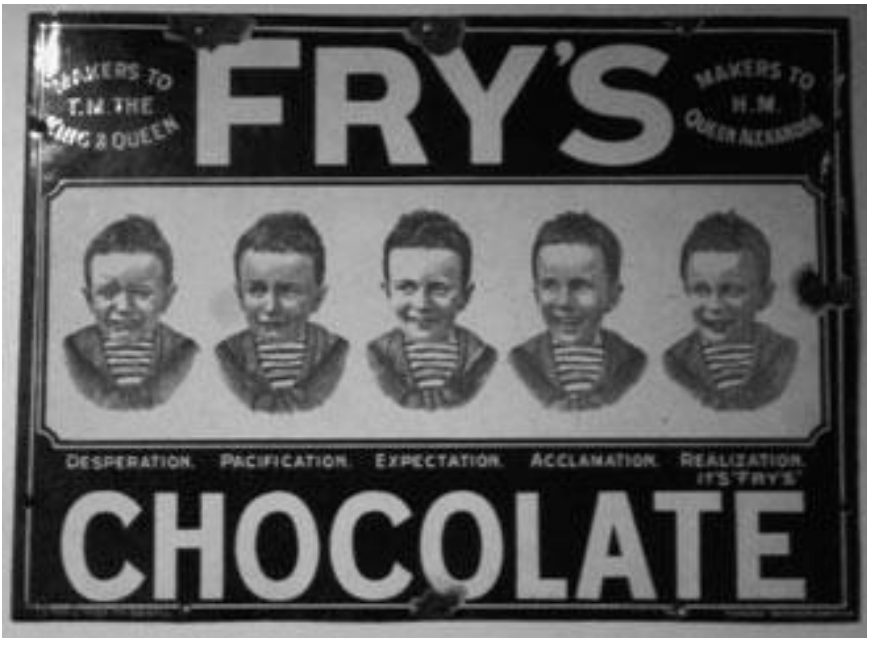

Figure 7.2 'Fry's Chocolate advertisement.'

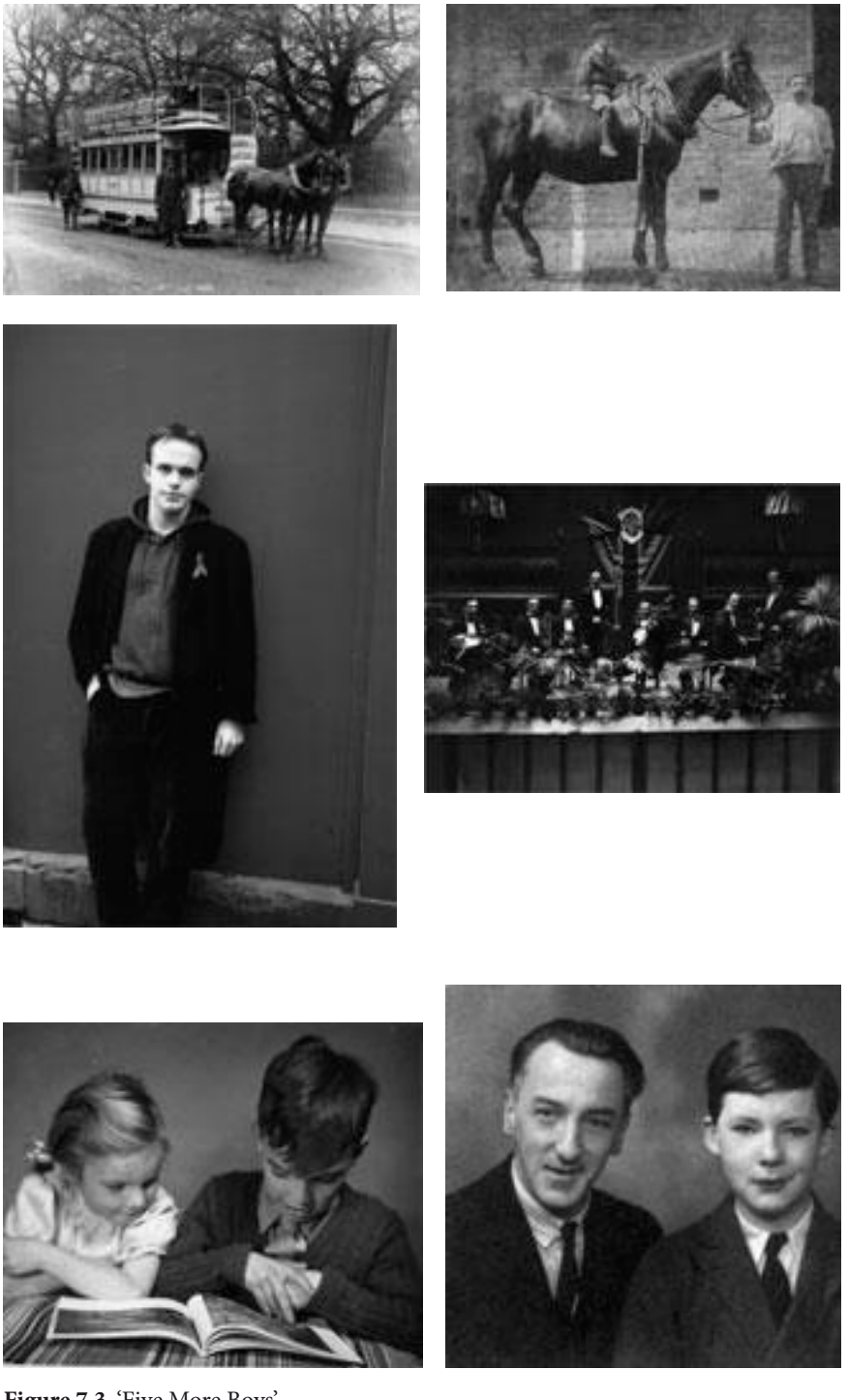

Figure 7.3 'Five More Boys'.

early years of the century, one family member, born about 1848, worked on the Deptford and Greenwich tramway, which was opened in 1891. He was claimed to be a veterinary surgeon – the trams were drawn by horses – but he may have been simply an ostler. His name was Christopher Stray. The boy on a horse is his son Stanley; the man in the picture may be his father, but there is no documentary evidence. Stanley, born in 1890, went to elementary school, then became a jobbing painter and decorator. But he was also a self-taught pianist. In the summer months he toured South Coast hotels in a Palm Court orchestra; at other times, he played the Wurlitzer organ installed in the New Cross Kinema in 1929, rising into view on a hydraulic lift while the reels of the film were being changed. While he was in view, a slide was projected showing his stage name, Jack Stanley. At home, his basement held mouldering copies of self-improvement books, including Harmsworth's *Self-Educator* and (a glimpse of yet another artistic talent) a six-foot-long cardboard model of the Queen Mary, alas never finished. His son Peter, shown by his side in the head-and-shoulders portrait, won a London County Council (LCC) scholarship to a minor public school and became a civil servant. Although he learned some Latin, the Second World War prevented Peter from going to university, but later in life he gained a degree at Birkbeck College through evening study. His son Christopher, the fourth of the five boys, gained an LCC scholarship to the same school, learned Latin, Greek and ancient history, and went on to university in 1963: he and his sister were the first generation of the family to do so.

This is the story of one family (my own); but its pattern of increasing access to education and opportunity is fairly typical. In the 1960s, when this story ends, compulsory Latin had just been abolished, and the public schools were increasingly becoming the major stronghold of the subject at the secondary level. If the family history I have outlined were continued to the current generation – the fifth of the five boys, born in 1978 – it would tell of a schooling without either Latin or Greek. In the same period, it would record the abandonment of the conception of education as a public good, and its redefinition as a commodity best left to market forces.

Classics and/or sociology

It is not surprising that Weber's metaphor was drawn from railways, since they formed a central part of the new industrialized world in which the founding fathers of sociology, Marx, Durkheim and Weber, lived and died. It was after a

journey from Liverpool to Manchester by rail in 1830, on the first passenger train to travel the route, that Tennyson wrote his well-known lines:

> Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
> Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.[9]

Here the tracks are not determining but directing: an iron road to a different future. (Tennyson did not realize that train wheels ran on rails, thinking they ran in grooves, rather like tramlines.[10])

The railways reappear in Marx's meditation on antiquity and modernity in his *Grundrisse*, the notebooks he filled in the 1850s. Here they stand in uncomfortable contrast with the ideals Marx had imbibed as a student:

> Is the view of nature and of social relations which lies at the basis of … Greek mythology possible with self-acting mule spindles and railways and locomotives and electric telegraphs? What becomes of Vulcan faced with Roberts & Co.,[11] Jupiter faced with the lightning-conductor, Hermes faced with the *Credit mobilier*?[12] What happens to Fama next to Printing House Square?
>
> … The difficulty is that [the Greeks] still give us artistic satisfaction and in certain respects remain as norms and unattainable models … Why should the historical childhood of mankind, where it blossoms most beautifully, not exercise eternal charm as a stage that can never reappear? One finds bad-mannered children and children old before their time. Most of the ancient peoples belong in these categories. The Greeks were normal children.[13]

The passage reveals Marx's reluctance to abandon the attachment to Greek culture he had gained from a classical education.[14] Marx had attended the University of Berlin, where he went to Immanuel Bekker's lectures on Aristotle. As a student he translated Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Tacitus' *Germania* and Ovid's *Tristia*, and later wrote a thesis contrasting the doctrines of Democritus and Epicurus. The conception of ancient Greece as part of the childhood of humanity makes it an unrecoverable paradise which possesses an eternal charm: the Greeks are at once superseded and outside time. Marx's interest in Greek art helps to explain his friendship, in the 1880s, with the German-Jewish-American Charles Waldstein, the first teacher of classical archaeology at Cambridge.[15]

Max Weber also had a classical education. At thirteen, he wrote a long essay on the late Roman Empire for his parents; at fourteen, his letters home from school were studded with classical references.[16] Weber's doctoral thesis of 1889 was entitled 'The History of Commercial Societies in the Middle Ages'. One of

his examiners was the great classical scholar Theodor Mommsen, who told him: 'When I come to die, there is no one to whom I would rather say, Son, the spear is too heavy for my hand, carry it on.'[17] The imagery is Roman, Mommsen imagining himself as the aging paterfamilias. Emile Durkheim learned Latin and Greek at school before going in 1879 to the École Normale Supérieure, the peak of the French educational system; in his first year he struggled with compulsory Latin verse and Greek prose composition.[18] One of his dissertations was written in Latin, as the regulations demanded.[19] Among his teachers was Fustel de Coulanges, author of *La Cité Antique*, whose influence can be seen in Durkheim's work.[20] I say little about Durkheim, since he thought in terms of social membership rather than of class and status. All three founding fathers of sociology had lifetimes which fell within a period of about one hundred years, from Marx's birth in 1818 to Weber's death in 1920. In that century industrialization reached its apogee and the social began to be theorized. The works of Marx and Weber are now classics, but the founders of sociology were both products of German liberal society and of its cultural heritage from the classically oriented humanism of the eighteenth century.[21]

Class and classics in nineteenth-century England

In the second half of the eighteenth century, social and cultural change combined to assemble what was in the following century often called 'the classical system'. The ideological opposition between the republican virtue of property-owning citizens and the denigrated world of commerce was undercut by the growth of middle-class groups whose fortunes came from manufacturing rather than land, but whose profits enabled them to buy land. These nouveaux riches wanted status as well as comfort, and adopted contemporary standards to get it, stocking their houses with the trappings of gentility, including classical books and statues. Many of them sent their sons to rural boarding schools, helping to provide the means for their recovery from centuries of moribundity.

The revival of these schools in the late eighteenth century was the first stage in the enormous expansion of the public-school sector, which by 1900 was firmly established, and clearly segregated in two ways. First, the public schools were joined by a cluster of preparatory schools set up to feed them. Second, the public schools themselves were stratified. I have already mentioned the elite group of nine Clarendon schools, one of which, Rugby, gave its name to a distinct version of football. Below this elite, a larger group maintained status partly through

mutual games-playing, partly by gaining the (mostly classical) scholarships offered by Oxford and Cambridge colleges. Some of these schools had been recently founded, or recently revived, by pupils of Arnold of Rugby, or by his pupils' pupils: schools like Sedbergh, Sherborne and Repton. A third group consisted of proprietary schools, set up as limited companies by middle-class parents. At the outer fringes were a host of small private schools aping public-school style by adopting and advertising their attributes: a classical curriculum, games, the old school tie.[22] The question of which schools counted as public schools had no simple answer, as it was essentially contested.[23] The criteria of judgement were at issue as well as the evidence. If these grand, not so grand and ridiculously aspirant institutions formed a stratified world separate from the thousands of small private schools and, in the later part of the century, the elementary or board schools run by local authorities, they also provided a stratified microcosm in given localities.

Most public schools were boarding institutions and recruited pupils nationally. But location mattered. One reason was that a rural, or at least non-metropolitan, location helped schools to create the isolated and transformative settings in which savage boys were made into Christian men (as Thomas Arnold put it), or bourgeois clods were shaped into gentlemen, and financial capital turned into cultural capital (as the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu put it). Another reason was that many schools retained founders' provisions for the schooling of local residents; and this led to families moving to their catchment areas in order to secure free education for their sons. (The practice is not unknown today.) At Rugby they were called sojourners, and started arriving in 1821; in 1830 a two-year residence rule was introduced to control access. In the following decade the headmaster, Thomas Arnold, fought a ruthless and successful campaign to close down the lower school, installing ignorant and ineffective teachers. One knew no Latin; the other was a Swiss whose pronunciation of Latin made him incomprehensible to his pupils. Numbers soon dropped, and the lower school closed.

Contact between school and local community could be embarrassing unless social hierarchies were strictly observed. Thus, in the case of Cheltenham College, its honorary secretary remembered that

> Had we admitted tradesmen . . . we should have had the sons of gentlemen shaking hands perhaps with school-fellows behind the counter, and a fusion of ranks taking place . . .[24]

Fees deterred those who were not well off. But, in addition to these barriers, the domination of the curriculum by Latin and Greek meant that only those who

had been prepared in the languages, by a private tutor or at a prep school, stood any chance of access. As competition increased, standards rose, and so did the length of prep-school schooling. A full gentleman's school education might stretch from six to eighteen. Some schools escaped such obligations by setting up schools for local residents – for example, Alleyn's school in Dulwich, named after the founder of Dulwich College and originally its lower school.[25] In this way, schools which had been founded several centuries before to educate local children became boarding schools with a national catchment area, in – but not of – their local communities.

The eighteenth-century world of patronage began to be eroded in the middle of the following century, when the written examination spread as a standard mechanism for evaluation and institutional access.[26] The best-known example is the replacement of patronage by examination for civil service entry after the Northcote–Trevelyan report of 1854. To a degree, however, the well-connected continued to succeed, as they could afford training in the relevant areas. As Gladstone remarked, it would be the public-school and university men who scored highly in civil service examinations.[27] The Indian Civil Service examinations were constructed in a way which favoured the products of English universities, notably Oxford, and were fine-tuned when necessary to keep out those who knew most about India – the Indians.[28] In any case, some departments held out – the Board of Education used patronage for appointments till 1919. The regulations allowed it for special consultants, and the Board's mandarins claimed that all their senior staff fell into this category. Similarly, the overseas civil service relied heavily on interviews, to get the right sort of chap, into the 1940s.[29]

The idea that the vernacular and its speakers marked out a separate social and cultural realm emerged in force during arguments over access in the nineteenth century. In mid-century, middle-class schooling and English schooling were seen as equivalent terms, denoting a world which had to be acknowledged and catered for, but which was inferior to the world of the classically educated gentleman. In the late Victorian period, newly respectable social groups went for local schools with some Classics, aiming for social status. The lateness of state intervention in schooling – elementary 1870, secondary schools 1902 – meant that the classical system embedded itself for several decades. In some ways the high noon of the mythicized public schools, with its novels and games cult, was the period from the 1880s to the First World War.[30]

Knowledge was not available only in schools. Gentleman travelled to Italy and (less often) to Greece, bought statues and vases and assembled them in their houses, creating connoisseur environments within which they could socialize

with friends and with which they could impress others.[31] In the 1830s and 1840s, with travel becoming easier, middle-class families began to visit Italy, using the handbooks published by Murray and Baedeker.[32] For the working classes, the nearest they could come to this experience was visiting museums and galleries. Let me take the British Museum as an example. In the 1760s, entrance was by free ticket but there was often a backlog, with thousands of people waiting to be given visiting appointments. The museum's director complained that his officers, men of liberal education, had to show round 'the lower kind of people, who in many instances had behaved improperly to them'.[33] His successor liberalized procedures, and numbers of visitors rose quickly.[34] But the limited opening hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. effectively blocked access to working people. A parliamentary select committee enquiry in 1835 was told by Sir Henry Ellis, the director at the time, that opening in Easter week would be disastrous: 'the most mischievous portion of the population is abroad and about at such a time . . . the more vulgar class would crowd into the Museum'; he suggested that sailors might come from the dockyards and bring their girlfriends with them.[35]

The early nineteenth century saw a new world of mechanization, not just in the railways, but before that in printing, with steam presses, stereotyping and lithography. Although taxes on paper made it difficult, books were increasingly produced for an expanding market of working-class readers and autodidacts. A sense of this market can be gained from the classical editions assembled in the 1820s by T. W. C. Edwards. The title page of his edition of Euripides' *Orestes* of 1823 claims both scholarship and accessibility, and the latter, at least, is further demonstrated in his page layout, where text, literal and verse translation, metrical analysis and notes offer the learner all he or she could want. Other books move in this direction, but the eccentric and obscure Edwards takes accessible multiplicity to its limits; and he is happy for his individual voice to be heard – 'this pronunciation is horrible'.[36]

The great Greek scholar Richard Porson, to whose authority Edwards appealed, had written in Latin; Edwards speaks directly to the reader in ordinary, if somewhat naïve, English. His *Alcestis* was savaged by a Cambridge don, whose text Edwards had used and criticized, but this is unlikely to have affected his sales in his own chosen market.[37] In the same period, interlinear translations became popular in the market Edwards was aiming at. This was an age of professors, self-promoting educators each with his own system: the Hamiltonian system, Locke's system, Ahn, Ollendorff, and so on.[38] A little later on, the firms of Cassell in London and Chambers in Edinburgh published large quantities of self-educator books and magazines. Cassell's serialized *Popular Educator* began

in 1852, and consisted almost entirely of lessons, including a series on Latin by a reforming Unitarian minister, Reverend John Beard. Beard had already published a book called *Latin Made Easy* (1849), and now reprised it. Lesson IV began with first declension nouns, and noted that several case endings were identical. Beard commented sympathetically: 'This undoubtedly is a defect in the language.'[39] Here the teacher is not just speaking directly to the learner; he is very much on his or her side.

Such books were disapproved of not just by scholars, but by conservatives who saw in them a dilution of literary value. Here is John Gibson Lockhart, Walter Scott's son-in-law and editor of the tory *Quarterly Review*, in 1827, reviewing a group of contemporary memoirs:

> The classics of the *papier mâché* age of our drama have taken up the salutary belief that England expects every driveller to do his memorabilia . . . Cabin boys and drummers are busy with their commentaries *de bello Gallico* . . .[40]

Papier mâché had been used for internal decoration since the early eighteenth century as a cheaper and lighter substitute for wood and plaster: the equivalent today would be plastics like expanded polyurethane. Lockhart's predecessor as editor, William Gifford, was no less right wing and even more savage, but had been raised from poverty by kindly patrons who perceived his talents. The same thing had happened to his contemporary Richard Porson; and it is worth remembering that in the bad old days of the late eighteenth century, before the foundation of local schools by the religious societies, patronage did sometimes rescue and promote poor and talented individuals. But many mute inglorious Porsons and Giffords must have languished unseen.

The Reverend Beard, and before him T. W. C. Edwards, used English to explain Latin or Greek. But, like Porson's editions of Greek plays, most Latin and Greek grammars of the early nineteenth century were written in Latin. They were thus incomprehensible to the autodidact, and attracted increasing criticism for expecting their readers to learn good Latin from books written in bad Latin. One of Edwards' productions was an English translation of the Eton Latin grammar; and in the 1830s reforming schoolmasters like Benjamin Kennedy of Shrewsbury started issuing textbooks in English. Charles Wordsworth, however, nephew of the poet and author of the market-leading Greek grammar from the 1840s to the 1870s, clung resolutely to Latin.[41]

English was the common language, but also the language of the common people, and many teachers and scholars were reluctant to use it. In 1843, in the first edition of their Greek–English lexicon, Liddell and Scott felt obliged to

defend themselves from the charge that using English rather than Latin was 'an unworthy condescension to the indolence of the age'. They went on to distinguish lexical glosses, which should be in English, from critical notes to texts, for which Latin should be retained. They were bolstered, perhaps, by the authority of the Greek–German lexicon, of which their book was to begin with a translation. Incidentally, the abridged edition of the lexicon was published simultaneously in 1843; this cheaper and thus more accessible book was clearly part of the original plan. Liddell and Scott may thus be the first mother and child dictionary to be published.[42]

1832 and All That

The 1832 Act is remembered in the popular imagination as a measure which increased the numbers of eligible voters; but it still excluded the poor – in its wake fewer than one in seven of the adult male population had the vote (and, for the first time, women were explicitly excluded).[43] The excitement caused by the passage of the 1832 Bill was seen in some quarters as the cause of declining interest in a contemporary classical journal. The *Philological Museum* was founded in 1830 and closed down three years later. In October 1833 one of its editors, Connop Thirlwall, later famous as a historian of Greece, wrote to his friend Baron Bunsen suggesting that its decline was in part caused by 'The excitement produced in the public mind by the events of the day . . .' He went on:

> we are in danger of sinking into that state of general and confirmed indifference to this branch of knowledge which the revolution and the system of Napoleon have produced in France, where, I believe, a taste for it is generally considered as a kind of fancy not much more respectable than that of a bibliomaniac, and as an indication of a somewhat weak head . . . I do not know whether in Germany it would be possible to meet with an educated man capable of thinking and saying that the value attached to the classical languages was a mere fraud practised on the credulous by those who found it their interest to keep up the price of a worthless commodity which they happened to possess. We sometimes hear such opinions in England . . .[44]

The point of maintaining the value of classical knowledge was not just to inflate the status of those who possessed it, but also to preserve this alliance of status and learning by controlling access to it by social inferiors. Upper- and

middle-class opinion was, however, divided on the question of working-class education; some thought it was dangerous to provide the inferior classes with any knowledge, while others believed that the right kind of education could promote obedience and docility. Similarly, in the early years of the *École Normale* in the 1800s, attempts to include Classics in the curriculum were blocked by Napoleon, who thought it might give rise to radical thinking. He was eventually persuaded that the inclusion of the right kind of classical literature would encourage correct opinions.

The references to France and Germany remind us that, in early nineteenth-century England, moral panics about the subversion of the social order often looked abroad. France was the country of revolution, and also of an algebraic mathematics full of arbitrary symbols and unknown quantities. This kind of mathematics infiltrated Cambridge in the 1810s, a university already suspect for being more liberal than Oxford, whose curriculum was firmly based on Classics. Both universities demanded that its students swore allegiance to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, but Oxford made them sign up on matriculation, Cambridge only on graduation.

Germany was the home of a rational theology which English conservatives saw as a threat to Christian faith. If Cambridge was suspect in conservative quarters, Scotland was a veritable cultural fifth column. It was from there that the attacks of the *Edinburgh Review* on Oxford had been launched in 1809, denouncing its religious restrictions, its narrow curriculum and – unkindest cut of all – the quality of its classical scholarship. The Scottish universities were mostly urban and non-residential, and attracted large numbers of bright poor boys – the 'lads of parts'. This grand tradition was described in George Davie's eloquently patriotic book *The Democratic Intellect*.[45] Subsequent writers have cast considerable doubt on his claims for the tradition, seeing it as a mechanism which, in promoting upwards movement, simultaneously reinforced class hierarchies.[46]

The defence of Oxford against what he called the calumnies of the *Edinburgh Review* was led by Edward Copleston. His finest rhetorical flourish came in this striking metaphorical passage:

> We want not men who are clipped and espaliered into any form which the whim of the gardener may dictate, or the narrow limits of his parterre require. Let our saplings take their full spread, and send forth their vigorous shoots in all the boldness and variety of nature. Their luxuriance must be pruned; their distortions rectified; the rust and canker and caterpillar of vice

> carefully kept from them: we must dig round them, and water them, and replenish the exhaustion of the soil by continual dressing.[47]

Writing in Oxford, the home of Aristotelian study, Copleston denounces the 'Platonic reverie' of regimentation in favour of good old English freedom. 'Espalier' and 'parterre' both indicate interventionist restriction, the one vertical, the other horizontal; and, though both words were naturalized in English, they were, significantly, both of French origin. Copleston may have used the unfamiliar word 'espaliered' deliberately – this is the first example of its English use noticed by *OED*. In eulogizing English freedom, he is nevertheless aware of the limits of personal aspiration: 'There are but so many good places in the theatre of life; and he who puts us in the way of procuring one of them, does us indeed a great favour, but none to the whole assembly.'[48]

Copleston spoke only of 'men': what of girls and women? They had very few schools before mid-century, though from the late 1850s the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations, run by the universities in local centres throughout the country, were opened up to them. From 1869 women's colleges were founded at the ancient universities.[49] But many must have been taught at home – or taught themselves. In 1887 the *Girl's Own Paper* carried a short article by Evelyn Upton entitled 'How I taught myself to read the Greek Testament.' She begins by declaring that she has never been to school or college:

> I am not a Girton girl. I have not graduated at Newnham . . . I have never even been in for the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations . . . When I was about sixteen, by way of letting off some of the mental steam, I began to study Latin for my own amusement. Then a few years later, I determined to attack the Greek tongue, in order that I might . . . read the New Testament in the original.

Upton goes on to describe how she learned the language, recommending books and pointing out some of the pitfalls of Greek. The dual is one of them, though Upton helpfully explains that it does not occur in the New Testament. The article is interesting in giving the pupil's eye view of learning, a pupil – one might think – excluded from knowledge commonly offered to boys. The truth is more complicated.

At the beginning of her article, having explained that she attended no schools or colleges, Upton tells us that she was educated at home by governesses, the last of whom left when she was thirteen. Not so deprived as one might have thought, then: so who was Evelyn Upton? Upton was her married name; she had been born Lady Evelyn Georgiana Finch-Hatton, daughter of the 10th Earl of

Winchilsea. Nor was her husband plain Mr Upton, but Henry Edward Montagu Dorington Clotworthy Upton, 4th Viscount Templetown. When she sent her article to the *Girl's Own Paper* she was twenty-three; she died in 1932, a year after her nephew Denys, Karen Blixen's lover, who died in a plane crash in Africa. None of this exotic and aristocratic context affects my liking for her article, but it does remind us that one can be an outsider in some ways but an insider in others.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the expanded and firmly established independent schools sector was joined by state educational provision: elementary schools run by local school boards from 1870, at which attendance was compulsory from the early 1880s, and municipal secondary schools aided by central grants from 1902. Not surprisingly, a clear status hierarchy emerged, and in the last quarter of the century aspirant middle-class parents usually tried to find private schooling for their children. The Endowed Schools Commission, appointed in 1864, investigated nearly 800 secondary schools. It found that many parents were keen to support local schools which taught Classics, not because they respected its educational value, but because they saw it (correctly) as a mark of social status. The Commission's report, published in 1868, recommended that schools should be organized into three grades, according to two criteria: leaving age and curriculum. The first grade kept children till eighteen and taught Latin and Greek. Pupils at the second grade schools learned Latin, and left at sixteen. In the third grade schools they left at fourteen, having learned neither language. This scheme, which we may now find appalling or risible or both, was in fact no more than a formal codification of contemporary practice. As with the public schools, the better-off parents benefited; in this case, because they could afford to keep their children at school through their teens, rather than needing their earning power in a family business or in outside employment.

All this stands in contrast to the dominant ideological image of Classics presented in the period by its cultured defenders: a standard of thought and action which floats above the particularities of time and space, of social interest. Invoked throughout the nineteenth century, it was asserted more stridently in its final decades, as relativizing theories and practices began to gain in influence and new subjects entered school and university curricula.[50] We have already seen Marx trying to reconcile the reality of historical and economic change with the image of Greece as an eternally inspiring childhood of the human race. This clinging to an exemplary standard can be seen not just in education but across the intellectual world. An example is found in the utterance of the American musician Louis T. Hardin, who declared in 1971 that 'classicism is a constant, not

subject to removal; it may be ignored and abhorred, but cannot be destroyed . . . Classicism is neither old nor new, it just is' (Scotto, 2007: 188).

Hardin, who was better known as Moondog, prowled the streets of New York for twenty-five years in a remarkable Viking-style costume (complete with spear), which I mention partly because it provides a link, however specious, with the spear Mommsen offered to Max Weber. To return to the ideology of eternity, what the history of English education shows us is the linkage between the cult of the timeless and eternal and the interests of specific social elites. Many of the members of the elite groups educated at public schools and Oxbridge surely believed that the Greek and Roman literature, in which they had been immersed, and which had made them the cultured men they were, was the best of all possible thought-worlds.

The early twentieth century saw the development of educational psychology and the rise of pupil-centred education. The curriculum, many thought, could now be organized not according to the nature of school subjects – a difficult job in any case, as more and more specialists were now clamouring for the inclusion of their own subjects – but on the basis of the interests of the child. This view might seem to promise a radical undermining of the established hierarchies of knowledge. In fact, it was co-opted into a defence of those hierarchies. In 1941 a committee was established to advise on curriculum and examination in secondary schools. It was chaired by Sir Cyril Norwood, once a reformist headmaster of Harrow but by then president of St John's College, Oxford; its report was published in 1943 (Board of Education 1943).

Norwood sought to clarify how the exigencies of school organization could be reconciled with the variety of children's individual capacity and interest, and came up with a neat tripartite scheme legitimated by the historical evolution of kinds of pupil through an immanent process:

> The evolution of education has in fact thrown up certain groups, each of which can and must be treated in a way appropriate to itself. Whether such groupings are distinct on strictly psychological grounds, whether they represent types of mind . . . these are questions which it is not necessary to pursue. Our point is that rough groupings . . . have in fact established themselves in general educational experience.

First:

> English education has in practice recognized the pupil who is interested in learning for its own sake, who can grasp an argument or follow a piece of connected reasoning, who is interested in causes . . . He can take a long view and hold his mind in suspense. He will have some capacity to enjoy, from an

> aesthetic point of view, the aptness of a phrase or the neatness of a proof.[51] Such pupils, educated by the curriculum commonly associated with the grammar school, have entered the learned professions or have taken up higher administrative or business posts. Again, the history of technical education has demonstrated the importance of recognising the needs of the pupil whose interests and abilities lie markedly in the field of applied science or applied art. The boy in this group . . . often has an uncanny insight into the intricacies of mechanism whereas the subtleties of language construction are too delicate for him.

And finally:

> Again, there has been of late years recognition . . . of still another grouping of pupils, and another grouping of occupations. The pupil in this group deals more easily with concrete things than with ideas. . . . because he is interested only in the moment he may be incapable of a long series of interconnected steps.

Norwood went on to suggest that each kind of pupil needed a different kind of curriculum. For the first group, there should be one which 'treats the various fields of knowledge as suitable for coherent and systematic study for their own sake'. The second kind of curriculum would be 'directed to the special data and skills associated with a particular kind of occupation'. 'It would', he explains, 'be closely related to industry, trades and commerce.' In the third kind, 'a balanced training of mind and body and correlated approach to humanities, Natural Science and the arts would provide an equipment varied enough to enable pupils to take up the work of life'.

This masterpiece of mandarin prose surely includes a self-portrait of its authors, masters of 'the aptness of a phrase' and 'the subtleties of language construction'. The report seems to have been largely written by its chairman, Cyril Norwood, and its secretary, R. H. Barrow. Norwood (1875–1956) had been headmaster of three public schools, ending up at Harrow, before becoming president of St Johns. His book *The English Tradition of Education* (1929) showed the influence of Plato and advocated hierarchical educational provision and separate schooling for girls.[52]

Reginald Barrow (1893–1984) had been appointed staff inspector for Classics at the Board of Education in 1929, and in 1943 also became staff inspector for grammar schools. He was the founding editor of *Greece and Rome* (1931) and was later to write a Pelican paperback on *The Romans* (1949). Like Norwood, he was a product of the Oxford Greats curriculum.[53] The surviving internal

correspondence makes it clear that Norwood saw his task as charting the scope of the grammar schools, and includes such phrases as 'secondary, i.e. grammar schools'.[54] Within the state school system, we might say that classics and the grammar school were safe in their hands; we might even say the same thing about class distinction. It is worth noting that the mandarin self-portrait painted by Norwood and Barrow had disguised its ideological and hierarchical status in a very English way – the way of implicitness and gradualism.

If we compare Norwood's report with Copleston's defence of Oxford in 1810, the similarities are striking; and, in fact, Norwood's thinking was infused by the Platonic reverie Copleston had denounced. The report, indeed, is remarkable for carrying a quotation from the *Laws* on its title page – perhaps the only British official publication ever to have a classical quotation in such a prominent place. The quotation consists of two sentences from *Laws* 644, followed by an English translation:

> Nowhere must we hold education in dishonour, for with the nobles of men it ranks foremost among blessings. If ever it leaves its proper path and can be restored to it again, to this end everyone should always labour throughout life with all his powers.

The Greek text is as follows:

> καὶ δεῖ δὴ τὴν παιδείαν μηδαμοῦ ἀτιμάζειν, ὡς πρῶτον τῶν καλλίστων τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἀνδράσιν παραγιγνόμενον: καὶ εἴ ποτε ἐξέρχεται, δυνατὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, τοῦτ᾽ ἀεὶ δραστέον διὰ βίου παντὶ κατὰ δύναμιν.

The translation Norwood gives below the Greek, presumably his own, is questionable in one place. He renders παραγίγνομενον as 'ranks with', whereas 'accrues to' or the like would be more accurate.[55] Thus translated, Plato is saying not that the best men *respect* education, but that they *gain* it. The blurring of this aspect of the quotation, I suggest, reflects the central thrust of Norwood's proposals, the continuation of educational hierarchy veiled as variety of needs.[56]

By the 1940s, the influence of the alliance of Hellenism, liberalism and self-education led by Gilbert Murray, Alfred Zimmern and Richard Livingstone had faded.[57] The ideological invocation of classical antiquity as an eternal and universal standard had shrunk to a rigid conception of Latin as a symbol of the grammar school curriculum through which, in the words of Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, some working-class children became middle-class citizens.[58] The agonies and ecstasies of their struggles, both to climb the educational ladder and to learn the new rules of middle-class life if they reached the top, have been

explored in a literature which began in 1957 with Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*.

Some of the struggle was with their parents. Tony Harrison was probably drawing from personal experience when he made the father in his film-poem *Prometheus* ask indignantly why his son's schoolteachers expected him to read Greek tragedy – 'all that crap.'[59] Latin was more acceptable to some parents – everybody knew that doctors needed it to write prescriptions. But for Harrison, as for thousands of others, it stood for the drudge of learning; as he writes in 'The School of Eloquence',

> On, on, on,
> The foldaway card table, the green baize,
> Caesar's de bello Gallico and lexicon.

And the Latin prose to do while his friends had fun, and he had to spurn their invitations to join them: 'I can't I've gorra Latin prose to do.'[60] While many children were trapped in this narrow conception of learning, classics itself was narrowed and fossilized in what a government inspector of education privately called 'thoroughness and unreality': Latin without the literature, without the Romans, in fact without anything except the grind which promised to make the learner disciplined and middle-class.[61] The 1950s were the Indian summer of this conjunction of classics and class, a summer brought to an end in 1960 by the abolition of compulsory Latin at Oxford and Cambridge.

Closure in classics

Inclusion and exclusion operate also within the field of classics, which is itself stratified, with its hierarchies of esteem, its centralities and marginalities.[62] What must be studied? What should be studied? What counts as classics? The answers have changed over time and have often been contested. In Cambridge, the dominance of mathematics from the early eighteenth century, and the influence of the narrow Porsonian tradition of textual analysis in the nineteenth, meant that ancient history was not taught seriously till the 1870s, classical archaeology till the 1880s.[63] In Oxford, Aristotle was central until the mid-nineteenth century but was later overshadowed by Plato; from 1830, modern evidence was encouraged in discussing ancient texts. These contrasting cases can be seen as examples of differential reception, which, in turn, might remind us that reception studies are an expanding field within classics – or are they without? A substantial

research network (*Classical Reception Studies Network*, est. 2004) is in place in Britain, and a dedicated journal (*Classical Receptions Journal*) has been founded, so that the field now seems to be firmly established. A modern case study of inclusions and exclusions in classics would do well to look at the reception of reception.

One obvious distinction between the established centre and the contested margin is that between original texts and translations. In a parodically simple world, serious students would read only Oxford Classical Texts and Teubner texts, while the masses would read translations. The Loeb Classical Library has bridged that gulf since 1912. Since then, it has become a standard resource for those whose education is insufficient or forgotten, and was, indeed, seen as a symbol of the embedded bourgeoisie by the rebellious architectural critic Reyner Banham, who declared that his work was aimed at 'the Loeb-reading classes'.[64] When it began, some were unhappy with the juxtaposition of original and translation on facing pages. In the 1880s, Jebb's editions of Sophocles (1883–96) had been criticized for the same reason: they provided too much help to learners. The delegates of Oxford University Press maintained an almost absolute ban on publishing translations throughout the nineteenth century. Thus, for example, three proposals for translations of the pioneering work by Durkheim's teacher Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, were sent to the Press in the last quarter of the century, and all were rejected.[65] Since the Second World War a new market for translations has been catered for, notably the Penguin Classics.[66] Social divisions and hierarchies cannot be mapped directly onto the differential status of texts and translations, but issues of access to and status of classical texts deserve to be explored in relation to social and institutional differences.

Conclusion

Social closure operates in both society and curricula. The Whig history of increasing individualism and widened social access to knowledge is, in great part, accurate. But we can also see a history of changes from explicit to implicit exclusion, in which mechanisms like examination have functioned both as routes into knowledge and as processes which favour some entrants. The central insight of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, giving Marxism a cultural twist, was that cultural capital enables its possessors to buy cultural goods.[67] Those whose families and schooling give them the right knowledge and techniques will always do better in assessment procedures which are formally

neutral.[68] The nineteenth-century examination reforms led to the triumph of middle-class candidates educated at Oxbridge. Similarly, the focus on individuals rather than classes can lead, as with Norwood, both to appreciation of individual differences and to the legitimation of a hierarchy of provision disguised as the satisfaction of a variety of needs.

Recent evidence shows that class is alive and well, and that life chances and educational success are still strongly linked to income and status. In schools, classics is in danger of being preserved within public schools, where annual fees can easily be twice as much as a poorly paid person's salary. In universities, the recession and the campaign to stress impact as an evaluating criterion for financial support threaten all humanistic provision. In this situation, Classics for All, the Iris Project, Greek in the Park and similar campaigns are to be welcomed and supported.

8

Hercules as a Symbol of Labour

A Nineteenth-century Class-conflicted Hero

Paula James

The focal point of this chapter is the 1889 Dockers' Union Banner (Export Branch), which features the stark image of a muscleman entwined with a serpent (Figure 8.1). The natural identification of the heroic champion is with Hercules, at first glance an apt image for representing the worker who wrestles with the evils of exploitation. The banner is heralding the struggle for social reform and improved conditions for workers enslaved by poverty and starvation. The anti-capitalist message – delivered explicitly in terms of a holy war – calls for all prostitution and destitution to be swept away; this figure therefore also embodies the Christian colouring Hercules had acquired over the centuries in his convoluted cultural trajectory.[1]

I shall show that this image – so simple in form – is complex in content, in terms of both its cultural referencing and its ideological import. A key text in the following interpretation is the analysis of this emblem (to which I contributed), found in the 2013 volume of essays, *The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem 1850–1925*, a substantial and significant work by Ravenhill-Johnson. Several of the thought-provoking papers at the 2013 Leeds conference *Hercules: a Hero for All Ages* have prompted me to reflect upon and refine my response to the dockers' banner. I am grateful for the feedback on my presentation at this event. The conference confirmed and complicated the multifaceted nature of Hercules and his labours; whenever and wherever the hero appears as an artistic symbol, he brings a whole set of conflicting allusions which cannot be fully suppressed.

This chapter has benefited from the framework set out in a forthcoming article by Henry Stead which views Hercules, transformed into the gentleman–bodybuilder, and his labours as a metaphor for the reactionary and progressive roles classics and classicists have played in the reception of ancient culture in the

Figure 8.1 Banner of the Dockers' Union, Export Branch, early 1890s.

era under scrutiny.[2] In this volume, Lorna Hardwick's approach to the agency of texts and images and the class configurations of those accessing popular media has been crucial to my understanding of the 'labour-movement' Hercules in his infinite cultural variety.

Classical and post-classical configurations of this high-profile mythical character invite the critical viewer to revisit him as a ready-made repository of ancient tropes and *topoi*. Thus, Stafford, who details his 'extensive portfolio of exploits', demonstrates Hercules' destructive and divine aspects along with his tragic and comic characteristics in classical imagery.[3] Linebaugh and Rediker, in their wide-ranging work *The Many-headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, place Hercules and his labours at the centre of the iconography of mercantilism and of the land-grabbing imperative of European states from the sixteenth century onwards.[4] Defeating the many-headed hydra, one of Hercules' first victories, became a symbol for the putting down of recalcitrant slaves and organized urban labourers who dared to strike and so disturb the equilibrium of their 'rightful' masters. Hercules was the hero who would destroy the rebels and the unruly 'mob' and

save the day for the oppressors. If needs be, he was also the ethnic cleanser. The term Holy War was employed to justify the genocide of Native Americans (the first nation of the New World), and Hercules was enlisted as a universal Christian soldier in this process.[5]

The Continental Hercules

It was in revolutionary France at the end of the eighteenth century that Hercules as an ideological symbol 'changed sides' in a significant way. He became a champion of the downtrodden, the impoverished and the dispossessed, after centuries as the hero of kings and autocratic monarchies throughout Europe and beyond. The figure of Hercules had been embedded for centuries in royal insignia on the continent. In Italy and Spain, the imagery of the hero and his labours adorned the palaces of the Medici and the town halls of Seville and Tarrazona. In 1682, Charles II of Spain was celebrated in literary works on Hercules as the descendant of the hero.[6] The Herculean narrative was most meticulously worked out at the French court, where his legends formed part of an elaborate theatrical pageantry during the reign of Louis XIV. Joan Landes explains that Hercules' representation (along with the Greek god Apollo) at Louis' court was designed 'to make tangible the mystique of kingship at the heart of absolutism, to lift the monarch from mere humanity to supernatural myth'.[7] For this very reason, it was always going to be a challenge to convert Hercules into a revolutionary icon during the turbulence in France at the end of the eighteenth century. It was a challenge, however, from which the French revolutionaries did not shy away.

The colossus which so impressed the crowds at the Festival of Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic (Versailles, August 1793) took the form of a huge Hercules, vanquishing a half woman, half serpent. The female snake represented the hydra of federalism, alluding to reactionary dissent spawned from the recently defeated tyrannical ruling class. These same radicals, namely the Montagnards, accused the Gerondist faction of being federalists and thus a threat to the unity of the new French Republic. The revolutionary Hercules therefore not only wields his club on behalf of the revolutionary masses, but directs its force specifically against the new republic's perceived enemy within. The hydra, as representation of the enemies of revolutionary unity, writhes at the hero's feet. The feminine hydra, however – as emblem of the class enemy – also carried overtones of the conflict between genders.[8] Hercules as the monumental male had been promoted in the revolutionary iconography to put women back

in their place. The hero was a rebuttal to female revolutionaries who threatened to take Marianne as a metaphor for their own participation in the overthrow of the monarchy.[9] So, even at his most revolutionary, the classical hero was capable of delivering a reactionary message.

Lynn Hunt writes that Hercules was, in any case, a contested and problematic symbol of the sans-culottes, not least because he was imposed upon the revolutionary masses by a leadership that was culturally distanced from them: 'Hercules was not a popular figure; he did not appear in the woodcuts or *imagerie populaire*. Hercules in spite of an iconographical metamorphosis was strongly associated with kingly power'.[10] This is not necessarily the whole truth of the matter. Alastair Blanshard argues that Hercules was indeed embraced as a hero for the revolution by the masses in 1790s France.[11] The people adopted and adapted him on their own terms, but he would become a wild card out of tune with the political discourse favoured by their leaders in the less militant period following the so-called Reign of Terror. For instance, a rougher, tougher Hercules began to appear in French street theatre in the form of an iconoclast smashing mannequins of the Pope and the Nobility.[12] The former hero of kings and princes was sending out a message of indiscriminate violence and wanton destruction against hierarchical structures.

The portrayal of Hercules as a violent iconoclast (a lord of misrule more fitted for the carnival than for responsible government) alerted the revolutionary leadership to unintended outcomes when such a malleable mythical hero was part of their aesthetic and ideological armour. It was precisely this kind of image (lack of restraint and anarchy) that the hydra (a female monster and Hercules' sworn enemy) had come to signify. No political movement wished to blur the boundaries between the hero and his monstrous foe.

British cultural contexts

In the UK, throughout the long nineteenth century, Hercules' exploits were already part of popular consciousness. The British fairground, deserving of a study in itself, frequently foregrounded a Herculean strongman. Carnival imagery came ready equipped with allusions from the ancient world, and the regalia of Hercules became the standard uniform of the circus strongman. Blanshard gives a brief summary of circus acts and the frequency of classical topics for daredevil performances and exotic shows.[13] Trips to the circus and days out at the fair meant that the masses were familiar with re-enactments of

mythical moments and historical disasters from the ancient world. Edith Hall notes the popularity of plays on classical themes, among them the enactments of the labours of Hercules by circus performers.[14] John Gorman features fascias from the 1898 St Giles's fair in which a boxer is punching an opponent dressed in a lionskin costume.[15]

Stead also traces the importance of Eugene Sandow, the bodybuilder who identified with Hercules, posed in animal skins and, complete with club, set up physical culture academies in British and European cities and became a personal trainer at European courts.[16] Perhaps puny princes might hope that their bodies would be transformed into kingly physiques with the help of a flesh and blood Hercules. The symbol or the statue of royalty had come to life. Blanshard and Stead refer to a largely fictional autobiography in which Sandow claims that classical statuary inspired him to develop his muscles.[17]

Sandow also drew a picture of himself as an exceedingly delicate child who became a modern colossus,[18] and yet he liked to present himself as a reincarnation or vivification of the Farnese Hercules, an ancient sculpture from the Baths of Caracalla at Rome, which was hugely influential 'on the popular conceptions of the Hercules look'.[19] Sandow's appeal was certainly not confined to aristocratic circles. The exhibition of the classical body beautiful in so-called high-art displays of male musculature may have been accompanied by an aristocratic discourse, but it would be sociologically simplistic to imagine that they were not in cultural negotiation. Maria Wyke introduced her article on 'Herculean Muscle' with the observation that the classical body in mass culture comes with a context of exchange between social classes, and that this process began in earnest during the Victorian era.[20]

Linebaugh and Rediker note that the strength and stamina of Hercules, and not least his right to destroy allegedly monstrous enemies, gave him considerable cachet as a fighter for privilege and profit through the centuries, so portraying his adversaries as the many-headed hydra became crucial to the ideological framework of this reconfigured hero.[21] By the early Victorian period, however, Hercules was being enlisted as a defender of the downtrodden – the very people that the ruling classes and merchant capitalists liked to portray as his demonic and disfigured opponents (the hydra heads attached to a single serpentine body) were claiming the heroic fighter as their champion. The iconographic traditions of the French Revolution had perhaps transferred to radical and reformist movements in Britain, even if the goal was social change through parliamentary means rather than the violent overthrow of monarchy and government.

One of the first general organizations of labour in Britain in the early nineteenth century was named The Philanthropic Hercules. It was an association of journeymen with a distinctly radical edge, which was formed in London at the end of 1818 with the shipwrights' leader, John Gast (1772–1837), as its president. Historically, journeymen were waged workers who had completed their apprenticeship, and this badge of skill gained them admission to their trade guild.[22] The formation of the Philanthropic Hercules was inspired by the Lancashire-based Philanthropic Society that assisted strike action and defended workers against oppression and ill use.

The choice of Hercules as a figurehead for this first national organization of workers is significant. Malcolm Chase points out that 'the ultra radical Thomas Spence had published *The Giant Killer* with reference to "the philanthropic giant killers, the deliverers of mankind"'.[23] In popular literature of the time, Hercules was often portrayed killing giants, linking him to biblical and fairy-tale characters. He was a hero who could capture the imagination of the masses and represent the underdog and the dispossessed as readily as the privileged and propertied. The hero had become bound up with a movement for radical reform. The industrial unrest that was occurring in 1818 was developing into just such a movement. During that year, the Lancashire strikes against wage fixing in the textile industries had started with the spinners but radiated out to power and hand-loom weavers, dyers, bricksetters and their labourers, carpenters and joiners, glassworkers and colliers.[24] The action was significant for its political consciousness. It was also well co-ordinated and clearly not as spontaneous as the machine-breaking of 1816–17. According to Chase, there is no up-to-the-minute, in-depth study of these strikes, but they took place as part of the general unrest in a period of severe economic depression and when the textile industry was in crisis.

The industrial disputes were part of a general movement in favour of and lobbying for constitutional reform. For this reason, Gast's choice of title – The Philanthropic Hercules – for the union of journeymen was a significant one in the history of Hercules as a class act. His name gave out a message of strength and heroism as well as one of solidarity and charitable altruism. Gast clearly had a vision of a parliament of working men and aspirations for the advance of general unionism, but the Philanthropic Hercules union also attracted artisans whose goal was the preservation of their reputation and respectability.[25]

Linebaugh and Rediker describe the way in which the suppression of the spinners' strike at Staleybridge in Yorkshire was celebrated as the defeat of the

hydra of anarchy and misrule.[26] For the owners of the means of production, Hercules was the man or myth of the hour, as he also represented the advance of technology (the introduction of machinery was disastrous for the workforce in the cotton industry). It was, after all, Hercules who had liberated Prometheus, giver of fire and technological know-how to the human race. Gast's Philanthropic Hercules turned the tables in the ideological warfare between employers supported by the government and the toilers in the factories. Hercules was now a symbol and spearhead of the struggle for protection against the plundering of decent working men's livelihood by greedy employers (who were now, by implication, the many-headed hydra with a single deadly purpose, profit-making). The appropriation of Hercules, one of the 'good guys' in ancient mythology and a hero forced to sell his labour power to others, in defence of the working classes was an apt one in the early part of the nineteenth century. The skilled workers, in particular, could unite around such a heroic name in their lobbying for a parliamentary reform that would liberalize labour laws.

The Philanthropic Hercules association was part of a campaign to ensure that the skilled wage-earner, a decent and valuable member of society, gained a fair price for his labour – labour power being his property and an inalienable right. The concept of a Philanthropic Hercules in the context of working-class struggle found its visual expression in the later nineteenth century, when the Herculean figure in the central panel of the Dockers' Banner (Export Branch) became a symbol for striking men at the London waterfront. What is interesting is that both militant movements were willing to embrace the classical hero, or a figure akin to the classical hero, as their champion. Hercules is both particular and general in the typology of the hero, embodying bravery and moral righteousness and acting as a beacon for a better future.[27]

Cultural locations: the Dockers' Banner (Export Branch)

This banner (Figure 8.1) was born out of a bitter struggle between capital and labour in the late nineteenth century, at a time when thousands of casual workers were starving in the London dockside slums of Poplar, East Ham and Rotherhithe. In 1889, Ben Tillett, also discussed in Hall's chapter on women of the Independent Labour Party in this volume, led a strike for a minimum hourly wage (the Dockers' Tanner) and a minimum shift of four hours. Tillett documents the strike in *Memories and Reflections* (1931). Skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers banded together, and the action gained wide support with

substantial donations from the Australian wharf side. For this reason – and in spite of the fact that the strike committee banned socialist banners from their protest marches and expressed their loyalty to empire and its industry – Engels viewed the conflict as a new phase in international solidarity and a break with Guild mentality.[28] The support given to the London Dockside by the Australian unions did herald a new spirit of internationalism. The city of Victoria sent £20,000 to the strike fund, the gratitude for which was emblazoned across the certificate of the 'Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland'. The spirit of international alliance can be seen in the new union's certificate (Figure 8.2), in the centre of the top panel of which is a blue globe surrounded by the coats of arms and flags of Britain and Australia. Just beyond these national insignia are two labourers accompanied by their respective national animals – the lion and the wallaby. The lettering at the top of the certificate (and beneath the handshake) reads 'The Grip of Brotherhood the World Over'.[29] The demands of the dockers were conceded in a settlement brokered by the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Manning.

Figure 8.2 Certificate of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 1891.

The Export Branch banner can be dated to the late 1880s, when the strike was in full swing, and there were wider demands for an end to the parlous plight of so many forced to live a life of despair and deprivation under capitalism. The similarity between the showground strongman and the muscular champion on the dockers' banner is striking. This is a Hercules of and for the working people in their struggle for a regular and minimum wage and for a dignity of labour. The single snake is not the many-headed hydra of Lerna but still embodies the multiple evils of exploitation, destitution and prostitution prolonged by the profit-making capitalists. The champion of the workers in their just cause might be meant to represent the coal-heavers of the dockyards, as they were regarded as super-strong (though usually 'spent by 45').[30] They were known for quaffing beer in great quantities, so, like Hercules, they were larger-than-life figures. The coal-heavers, like the stevedores, were better paid, an aristocracy of muscle, but they had joined the strike with nothing to gain for themselves. Such men could be characterized collectively as the philanthropic Hercules, ready to take up the cudgel for their suffering fellows.[31]

It is obvious that the dockers' banner breaks with traditions and has apparently used a classical hero in a much starker and confrontational way, suggesting not simply that the worker is a powerhouse of energy and strength in service to mining, manufacture and shipbuilding, but that he can use his might as a warrior against the exploiting classes. Nevertheless, the banner cannot be entirely divorced from the iconographic traditions of the skilled workers and their associations. Heroic workers were featured in the emblems from the early days of union organization. They did not, however, occupy the whole space of a banner or certificate (the dockers' Hercules really is centre stage) but were regularly placed upon classically composed structures.

The designer of the dockers' banner has given his Herculean worker a frame in the style of a roundel. The roundels or cameos included in many certificates conventionally depicted key inventors of new technology, captains of particular industries or union officials, but also biblical founding fathers of the trade. Cameos of this type are featured in the very influential 1852 certificate by blacksmith James Sharples (Figure 8.3). Sharples won the competition run by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), a newly emergent composite association in need of an emblem that would harmonize the interests of all its members. His elegant and accomplished design may look utterly different from the dockers' banner, but it did proclaim the presence and power of the working man. He set the tone of future emblems with his use of the ziggurat or crepidoma (a three-level pyramid supporting a Greek temple) as an architectural frame.

Figure 8.3 Certificate of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Machinists, Millwrights, Smiths and Pattern Makers, 1852.

The worker is elevated on this flattened pyramid structure, occupying the place that the gods would normally take up. Indeed, the blacksmith is portrayed as a Vulcan or Hephaestus figure.[32] There is no Hercules in the ASE emblem – in which classical figures and the Graeco-Roman pantheon play an aesthetic and ideological role – but the celebration of the forge-workers as divine archetypes was a bold statement from the emergent organizations of skilled labour.

The message of skill and strength may have been tempered by the reassuring and non-confrontational text and the peaceable intentions, conveyed in the refusal of the blacksmith to mend the sword of Mars. But Sharples clearly champions the heroic stature of the worker, showing him as the lynchpin in capitalist production and a key contributor to Britain's position as the industrial powerhouse of the world. It is significant that the 1891 certificate of Ben Tillett's Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland (formed in the aftermath of the strike and mentioned above) followed the (by then well established) principles of classical plinths and pedestals, with the addition of the flamboyance and fussiness that characterized

much earlier emblems from Freemasonry and friendly societies. The difference is this:

> it celebrates the unity between all the various types of work, unskilled or semiskilled, listed on the pedestals, and with not only Australian counterparts but internationally – the lettered strapwork at the top of the certificate, just beneath the image of the handshake, reads, 'The Grip of Brotherhood the World Over'.[33]

John James Chant's 1857 membership certificate for the Friendly Society of Iron Founders (engraved by John Saddler) could be viewed as occupying an intermediary position between the Sharples design and the dockers' banner (Figure 8.4). The Chant emblem has a partially naked worker at the centre of the certificate. Chant was most certainly influenced by Sharples' structural design for the ASE membership certificate, but he has chosen to make a muscle-bound miner wielding the pickaxe the compositional fulcrum of the piece. The snake in this emblem is purely representational and far from threatening. On the contrary, it has positive associations; the coiled serpent to the left of the miner is a

Figure 8.4 Certificate of the Friendly Society of Iron Founders of England, Ireland and Wales, 1857.

mathematical symbol for eternity. It is located close to Justice, an abstract woman of some importance who herself is immortal.[34]

However, the most direct influence upon the composition of strong worker and adversarial snake in the dockers' banner can be ascribed to a piece of elite art. Ravenhill-Johnson has noted that the heroic pose in the dockers' banner is modelled upon Frederic Leighton's *Athlete struggling with a python*, exhibited in 1877.[35] The Leighton work was much admired and discussed by the Victorian critics and displayed by the Royal Academy for a very different kind of audience from the strikers and their supporters. Aesthetic hierarchies are subject to seepage, however; Walter Crane clearly appropriated the athlete and python sculpture for the illustration 'The Man and the Snake' in his 1886 book *Baby's Own Aesop*.[36] Critics of Leighton's sculpture expressed concern that the athlete was not necessarily winning the wrestling match with the python; but the banner hero could be imitating a circus or snake-charmer act. He is almost using the creature to flex his own muscles and test his strength, a Sandow moment perhaps, as this bodybuilder preferred to strike a static pose rather than simulate a fight.

The unknown banner artist may not have needed the image mediated in this way. It would seem that he has gone directly to the 'high art' source and modelled the male worker upon Leighton's aristocratic notion of the body beautiful:

> In this battle for power and supremacy, rather than the body of an athlete representing the middle- or upper-class man, it now represents the working-class man, and it is the evil serpent of capitalism that symbolizes the middle and upper classes.[37]

The dockers' Hercules is a celebration of strength and sinewy limbs that honest toil has produced, a labouring hero in a whole new sense.[38]

Whose Hercules, which labour?

In 2013 I dubbed the drawing in the banner as relatively crude and naïve, but, on reflection and closer inspection, this is, in fact, a skilfully executed picture with plenty of scope for compositional analysis. What follows is not a technical critique, however, but a closer look at the Hercules narratives suggested by this iconic work.[39] There is no question that the Hercules figure has right on his side in wrestling and disabling the serpent, and this is reinforced by the words on the strapwork below: 'This is a holy war and shall not cease until all destitution,

prostitution and exploitation is swept away.' The 'Be sure you are right, then full speed ahead' lettering on the lifebuoy above the picture is yet another subtext for moral certitude, referring to a journey on the sea and a pilgrimage against evil. The legends from left to right respectively take up the motto of the Industrial Workers of the World, 'an injury to one is an injury to all', and borrow the sentiments of soldiery about fighting and dying but never surrendering. There is a cosmopolitan and global thrust to this banner that befits the export branch of the newly formed union.

Ravenhill-Johnson states that 'the artist has used vivid complementary colours of red and green to add to this sense of drama and conflict'.[40] The setting for the scene is quite apocalyptic, in the manner, perhaps, of a painting by the Romantic artist John Martin (1789–1854, famous for his bleak landscapes, apocalyptic biblical scenes and dystopian visions), with just a hint of foliage peeping out over the rocks in the background. Hercules himself could be hewn from the boulder on which he kneels, and he is anchored among the crags in an impasse with the serpent, which is coiled about his body. The bright green tendrils and leaves that frame the struggle suggest something more optimistic and ordered when the workers prevail in their just cause. On the other hand, the winding foliage picks up the colour of the insinuating snake, as if it might have emerged from the surrounding greenery. The biblical resonances of this scene cannot be ignored, and the subtext of the wily serpent in the Garden of Eden would complement the clearly Christian message at the bottom of the banner. The background is like a tapestry and evokes the patterns of William Morris's Arts and Crafts movement. Morris had high hopes for a future of fulfilment and creativity with the dignity of labour restored.[41]

Walter Crane's influence could be at work here (the similarity of the banner picture to his 'Man and the Snake' illustration has already been mentioned). Crane was a close friend of Morris and shared in utopian and romantic views of pre-capitalist economic and social formations.[42] It would seem, then, that there is a strand of artistic eclecticism detectable in the framing design. On a cautionary note, the aesthetic of the patterns and colours in this composition may have been the major motivation for the design, rather than the symbolic implications of such features. Even so, both the designer and the viewer familiar with the traditions of trade union art and its use of symbolism would be sensitive to the statements implicit in the artistic arrangements of the banner.

Not surprisingly, the Hercules in the banner quickly emerges as a complex and problematic symbol for the dockers' strike and their broader aspirations. We have to bear in mind that, while these workers were challenging the injustice of

the system that was impoverishing, even strangling, them, they were expecting to share in the benefits of an empire that ruthlessly exploited subjugated peoples. Elsewhere I have suggested that there is a strong and continuous contradiction in the British workforce that tends towards anti-capitalism while remaining pro-imperialist. In classical myth Hercules represents the drive towards colonization (one of his epithets is *oikistes*, 'founder') as well as being a liberator, able to free communities of monsters and monstrous tyrants.[43]

It was, perhaps, fanciful of me to argue in 2013, in the context of a discussion of this 1890s banner, that Hercules' huge appetite (as attested in classical legend) could – counter-intuitively in this particular emblem – symbolize the greed of global capitalism as readily as the snake he is squeezing so tightly.[44] The dockers' champion is much more closely identified with the morally upright and Christian Hercules than the heavy-drinking, womanizing and flawed hero of the Graeco-Roman world, but he might be recognizing aspects of himself in the monster he has to defeat. In this brave new world, temptation is held at bay and the strong-minded man is cautious and circumspect about making eye contact with the evil enemy, the devil incarnate.[45] This interpretation does have some credence if we revisit the earlier discussion about how interchangeable Hercules and the hydra proved to be as paradigms for positive and negative attributions. If the snake represents the profit-hungry employers, supplanting Hercules as their god-like protector, then the dockers' hero is tussling with and defeating the demon that had been used through the centuries to symbolize the workers themselves.[46]

Another visual reference that had percolated through the artistic traditions was the marble statue (Roman, second century CE), housed in the Capitoline museum, of a baby Hercules holding a snake as if he had just acquired a new toy rather than performed the miraculous feat of vanquishing the two serpents sent by Juno to dispatch him.[47] This classical sculpture shows a fearless, indeed playful, infant hero holding the slippery assassin at arm's length and looking rather fascinated by its form. Both the baby and the banner Hercules (one needs recourse to a magnifying glass for the latter) have nicely coiffured heads; the curls and whorls could be regarded as snaky locks, which would then function as a signifier for the hero's first labour and other serpent-related conquests to come. When it comes to the Herculean connections, it is distinctly possible that there is more to the banner hero than meets the eye.

Let us look at some examples. Given the employment of the many-headed hydra in the art and artefacts of the French Revolution, it may be that the proliferation and the multifaceted nature of capital is a 'hydra' subtext in the

banner,[48] but the reference to 'sweeping away' also suggests the cleansing of the Augean stables by the hero who diverts a river to expel the filth. This is a Hercules for workers at the waterfront, those who had been forced to live in squalor at the London dockside.[49] Another challenging serpentine enemy was Achelous, the centaur, who was able to metamorphose into various animals before Hercules defeated him in the form of a bull. One of his guises was that of a serpent, and in Francois J. Bosio's 1824 sculpture (the Louvre, Paris) a macho and active Hercules is throttling the snake and poised ready to smash it down.[50] Achelous' powers of transformation make him a shape-shifting challenge, not quite on the scale of the many-headed hydra but yet another hybrid monster that goes beyond a single body.[51] This labour is also located in water.

The last single serpent associated with Hercules is the guardian of the golden apples of the Hesperides.[52] The setting of the struggle on the banner looks no more promising as a locus for an earthly paradise than the Garden of Eden association already discussed. On the other hand, the image of the dockers' champion wresting the fruits of their labour from an acquisitive creature (the employer as a python squeezing the life out of the workforce) would be a graphic reminder of what the struggle and strike were for. While we can assume an educated viewer would be familiar with this labour, it may not have been so frequently staged in popular theatre.

The question of reception

It seems highly likely that the snake in the dockers' banner is aligned with Crane's conception of the coils of capitalist constriction and would be seen as such by some spectators and those who displayed it and carried it aloft on marches.[53] However, the symbolism is slippery, particularly the ideological registers of the Herculean adversary. It could be a class-collaborative symbol, as Victorians had shared perceptions of the snake, especially when it was set up as the foe of the classical strongman, a cross-cultural icon by the later nineteenth century. In the press and in popular entertainment the snake was generally an evil presence, something exotic and oriental, while the athlete with his rippling muscles and physical fitness was a force for good, a civilizing presence.

Even so, it is difficult to avoid the phallic connotations of the snake, and yet again to think in terms of the enemy entwined with the hero and an externalization of an inner demon to be fought by the hero, who has been reinvented to defeat

unbridled sexuality as well as exploitative greed. The thought-provoking 1990 chapter by Nicole Loraux on the fluid boundaries between the super-male and the feminine aspects of the classical Hercules focused on those 'convulsive moments' in literary traditions when 'the virility of the hero quakes'.[54] In her examination of this most popular Greek hero, Loraux explores his role as seducer, slave, husband and harrier of monsters, many with female attributes. She suggests that not only does his suffering allow him to experience the agonies of femininity in his own body, but also his mythical narrative is peppered with disruptions of gender roles and of the distribution of male and female characteristics.

Hercules has physically intimate relationships with snakes – single and multiple – and the question of their sexuality is at least as problematic as that of the hero's. The ambiguity is embedded in classical and post-classical representations of the labours. Although the banner snake is closely connected with the many tentacles of capitalist exploitation in Crane's posters for socialism and socialist reconstruction, the image of the Irish Sea Serpent was regularly employed by the establishment press as a negative symbol of a pagan past, of the folklore and nationalist aspirations of a colonized country. Since St Patrick rid Ireland of snakes – or so the legend goes – this choice of negative icon for Ireland seems eccentric and insulting in equal parts. Many of the unskilled dock labourers were Irish émigrés – hence the involvement of the Catholic Church in negotiating a triumphant, if temporary, victory for the strikers – so it may be counter-intuitive to wonder whether the snake entwined about the muscular man was intended as an allusion to Ireland as a place of superstition and subversion.

In the absence of any minutes of meetings about the design and designer of the banner, it would be difficult to prove that there was such a subtext, namely that the dockers' champion is wrestling with the 'worm' of feminizing and sinuous sexuality, set to subvert a bright future of British technology, industry, prosperity and expansion. It is, nevertheless, intriguing to speculate that an upper-class viewer might infer a reassuring message from the banner, namely that the workers themselves were on side in promoting a powerful athleticism for the purposes of 'progress' on an industrial, entrepreneurial and global scale. Other banners and emblems of this period were anxious to display patriotism and loyalty to the empire. Socialist placards and flags were considered out of place in the large-scale demonstrations during the strike and, indeed, were banned by the strike committee from these 'respectable' protests on the streets of London.[55]

Afterword

The Dockers' Union Banner (Export Branch) is described by John Gorman as an example of the militancy of the 'new unionism'.[56] He talks in terms of 'forceful slogans representing a break with the conciliatory mottoes of the old craft unions'. Gorman also cites the evidence of old glass negatives which show that the design was later copied. It is, of course, confrontational in its affirmation of the need for a holy war against the conditions of the dock-workers. It proudly proclaims the motto of universal brotherhood between workers and is a singularly effective and agitational expression of their right to form associations for fair pay and a share of the profits they created. The choice of a classical hero to represent the labour force and the victory they believed was in their grasp demonstrates that the designers and manufacturers of the banner understood the power of the past to portray the hopes of the future.

However, the figures and motifs of the Graeco-Roman world are by no means straightforward signifiers. A proletarian Hercules exercising his uncompromised masculinity and taking on the employer and the economic system that exploited his class could never entirely shed the skins of his many-layered reception in ancient and modern times. The hero in the banner is embarking upon a new labour, but cannot escape the typology that goes with the territory whenever the strongman-versus-snake myth is evoked. This chapter has attempted to tease out just some of the ideological and cultural complexities that the image of the Dockers' Union Banner presents to the scholar of reception, not least the potential of a classical symbol to compromise a radical message from working men and women. It could be that this 1890s Hercules was ultimately more of a shared than an appropriated figure, in both a classical and a class context.

9

Vulcan – a 'Working-class' God?

Annie Ravenhill-Johnson

Towering over the city of Birmingham, Alabama, on the top of Red Mountain, is a colossal statue, *Vulcan*, the largest cast-iron statue in the world.[1] It is the second largest statue in the United States after the Statue of Liberty, properly known as *Liberty Enlightening the World* (1886), by Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. The Roman god of the Alabama forge is fifty-six feet in height from his sandals to his extended fingers. He stands beside his anvil, bearing in his left hand a hammer and holding on high in his right a huge spear, signifying an example of his completed work, perhaps even one of Zeus' thunderbolts, of which he was the traditional manufacturer. The work of Giuseppe Moretti, an Italian immigrant, it was commissioned by the businessmen of Birmingham's Commercial Club in 1904 as a symbol of Birmingham, Alabama's status as producer of iron, cast-iron pipe and rail steel. *Vulcan* was cast in twenty-one pieces by Alabama's Birmingham Steel and Iron Company, requiring a huge team of workers, and taken to the World's Fair of 1904 in St Louis, Missouri, where he was assembled. He was dedicated on 7 June 1904 in the Palace of Mines and Metallurgy – a grand statement advertising the city of Birmingham and the state of Alabama to the world. The statue won the World's Fair Grand Prize, as well as medals which were awarded to the sculptor and the foundry. Vulcan today has been restored and still dominates the city on his own 'Mount Olympus'.[2]

Moretti may have relished the opportunity to create a colossal statue with classical antecedents. Behind all such statuary lies the cultural memory of the enormous statue of Helios the Sun-God, the Colossus of Rhodes, built to welcome ships to that island in 290 BC. Colossal statues were commissioned by both Nero and Constantine, and the idea was revived in the nineteenth century, when neoclassical colossi representing national identities were favoured: L. M. Schwanthaler's bronze *Bavaria* in Munich (1850), Jean M. Bonnassieux's bronze *Notre Dame de France* (1860) and Ernst Von Bandel's *Hermannsdenkmal* on a hill outside Düsseldorf, which commemorated the German warrior

Hermann ('Arminius' in Latin) over the Roman Army (1875). But a colossal Vulcan, a neoclassical statue representing industrial labour, was something quite new and remarkable. The god's posture and physiognomy are reminiscent of Roman imperial architecture – the *contraposto* pose, arm lifted as if he were declaiming, and a facial expression of impassive authority. But the sense of movement and the musculature draw more on Hellenistic Greek traditions of sculpture.[3]

The class politics here is complicated. The capitalist forge-owners subsidized the statue, but their wealth came directly from the labour of the ironworkers. It is, perhaps, appropriate that Vulcan as a hero has often been problematic. After all, he obeyed the instructions of the tyrannical Zeus in the Aeschylean tragedy *Prometheus Bound*, and in so doing gruesomely fastened his fellow Titan Prometheus to the hard rock of the Caucasus (Aeschylus, *PV* 1–81). Because Prometheus, as fire-god and the hero of much Abolitionist art and literature, had since the 1770s so often been identified as a hero of labour and advocate of the oppressed,[4] his imprisoner Vulcan sometimes appears as a personification of oppressive capital, for example in the socialist John Wheelwright's poem 'Titanic Litany': Prometheus is 'tortured by the tyrant vulture / whom Vulcan riveted as firmly as machines / can rivet laborers to capital'.[5] This view of the relationship between Prometheus and Vulcan, infused with the class politics of industrial capitalism, meant that traditional artistic representations of Vulcan chaining Prometheus, such as Dirck van Baburen's *Prometheus Chained by Vulcan* (1623),[6] became capable of very different, politicized readings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The tension between Vulcan as worker-hero and Vulcan as oppressor can also be read into the Alabama statue. Does it really glorify the act of labour? Is it primarily an Alabaman *nationalist* monument rather than a statement about the valuable role of the working class? Is it just evidence of businessmen looking for capital investment in Alabama from wealthy industrialists elsewhere? Maybe. Yet, in the southern states, industrialization was perceived as a progressive force because it was replacing slave-based agriculture. Vulcan's presence in a place of honour overlooking the city of Birmingham, Alabama, as an icon of the city, reveals his enduring importance as a personification of heavy industry and the city's industrial workers.

Regardless of the complexity of the messages he emits, the Vulcan of Alabama is just the biggest and most famous of a whole category of Vulcans used in publicly visible art which celebrate heavy industry, especially in the factory towns of Britain from the early days of the Industrial Revolution. The Alabama industrialists looked to Europe for their sculptor, and it was from

Europe – specifically the British metal industry – that they derived their desire for a statue of Vulcan. This chapter discusses some important appearances of Vulcan in art, mostly in Britain during the 'Age of Reform' between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, but with comparative material drawn from earlier eras and our contemporary world in order to clarify the discussion. The intention is to show how representations of the metalworker deity subtly changed as the role of industrial production in the British economy increased, and how these representations crystallized the tension between celebrating the labour of the working class and the pride of their employers – the factory-owners – in their wealth and prominent role in the civic community.

There is no doubt that workers with metal and fire identified personally with Vulcan, or his Greek equivalent Hephaestus, in ancient times. Hephaestus was the divine and archetypal craftsman of the forge, the lame son of Hera and Zeus, addressed in the ancient 'Orphic' *Hymn to Hephaestus* as the 'strong-handed, deathless' and 'all-taming artist', who possessed supreme power over material substances.[7] His magical forgings include, among others, a chair with inbuilt fetters to bind his mother, the axe which split Zeus' head so that Athena could leap forth, the thunderbolts of Zeus, the arrows of Eros, the doors of the Palace of the Sun, the first woman (Pandora), his own beautiful maidservants – golden robots within whom he had implanted speech[8] – and the great shields of Achilles and Aeneas described in the *Iliad* book 18 and the *Aeneid* book 8. When he caught his wife Aphrodite in bed with Ares, the god of war, he famously avenged himself by capturing them in chains and displaying them to the other gods, who burst into laughter (*Odyssey* 8.266–343). He was worshipped by ancient working men in guilds of smiths all over the Greek world, although the cult centred on the suitably volcanic island of Lemnos in the north-eastern Aegean.[9]

There does seem to have been an identifiable 'lower-class' aspect to this god's appearance and status, relative to the other Olympians. First, Homer recounts how, as a child, his father Zeus seized his little son by the foot and threw him from Olympus, home of the gods, to the world of humans below. He fell all day and at sunset landed on Lemnos with little life left in him (*Iliad* 18.394–404). This rejection by his father and ejection from the home of the gods, together with his childhood on Lemnos, where he was brought up by the Nereids and taught metalworking skills, imply that, although born a god, he was considered inferior, both physically and socially. He was taught the blacksmith's trade as though he were a mere mortal. Second, he is often portrayed comically, in both ancient literature and art, in company with slave-like Cyclopes, his fellow foundry-workers, or drinking with riotous satyrs, riding a donkey rather than a

horse, and clutching the tools of his trade.[10] Third, his disability may have been typical enough of smiths in the ancient Greek world, where metalworking was one of the few professions available to the lame. His upper body became disproportionately developed, and he spent his days sweating (*Iliad* 18.372) in the heat and dirt of his subterranean forge, manufacturing magical artefacts at the whim of other gods. Fourth, in Roman statuary Vulcan is frequently depicted wearing the *pileus*, the conical cap which was bestowed on a slave when he was emancipated in order to indicate that he had become a freedman,[11] which differentiated him from the slaves of the lower levels of the artisan class. This headgear marks him out as a manual worker, but a superior one.

Excitement about Vulcan was aroused by the evocative Orphic *Hymn to Hephaestus,* which was unknown outside Byzantium until its first manuscript reached Venice in 1423. It was first printed in Florence in 1500. By 1600, five more editions, including the Aldine edition of 1517, had been published. Parts of it may date from as early as the sixth century BC, when it was probably developed and circulated orally; the final form in which we can read it may date from as late as the fourth century AD. Composed in flawless dactylic hexameters, the Orphic *Hymns* were used by mystic initiates who, through prayer, libation, sacrifice and secret ceremonies, invoked a deity and asked their blessing. It is possible that the *Hymn*, while originating in workmen's guilds, also has Stoic associations, since the Stoic philosophers identified God both with an intelligent eternal 'reason' or *logos* and with fire.[12] The Orphic *Hymn to Hephaestus* celebrates Vulcan as the divine, anthropomorphic representative of the cosmic element of fire which dwells in human bodies, sometimes as the bringer of light to mortals, and as an eternal artisan and worker.

The forge-working ancient god fascinated the alchemists of the Renaissance and Early Modern Europe. He also appears in seventeenth-century emblem collections as a symbol of friendship. Through Plato's description of Vulcan welding together people who love one another (*Symposium* 192d–e), Vulcan came to be associated with marriage, and the symbols of his anvil and hammer begin to appear in the iconography of British cartoons in relation to marriages conducted at Gretna Green.[13] In this same century, the story of Vulcan's revenge on Mars and Venus was staged in several guises in popular musical theatre, which ensured he became familiar to a wide public, through Ebenezer Forrest's (1729) *Momus Turn'd Fabulist: or, Vulcan's Wedding. An Opera* (1729) and especially Charles Dibdin's wildly successful *Poor Vulcan*: *A Burletta* (1775, and many times revived). An early poem by Robert Burns is addressed to the smiths he wants to shoe his horse (named 'Pegasus', in reality as well as

suitably for the purposes of the poem), whom he invokes, pretending to be Apollo, as 'Vulcan's sons of Wanlockhead'.[14]

Burns may have been drawing on the traditional representations of Vulcan and other figures in festive shows and street pageants organized by local guilds since medieval times. A Christmas play in Ireland as early as 1528 featured a play about Ceres performed by bakers, and another Vulcan performed by smiths.[15] By the eighteenth century, the procession staged annually at the Shrewsbury Show included comically dressed figures with outsize heads leading the members of each guild – the masters, followed by their journeymen and apprentices – through the streets. At Shrewsbury, shoemakers were represented by Crispin and Crispianus, tailors by Cupid, skinners by a stag, and hairdressers by Elizabeth I. The smiths were led by the figure of Vulcan. In another street pageant, held in Dublin in 1725, there was a well-publicized controversy between the smiths and the tailors – Vulcan and Cupid – as to which guild should take precedence in the procession.[16] But it was undoubtedly the Industrial Revolution that brought a heroically glamorized figure of Vulcan to the centre of public art and architecture. A fascinating early instance is the thirty-shilling cheque issued by the Dowlais Ironworks in South Wales in 1813. On the right stands Britannia, but on the left a near-naked, muscular Vulcan stands with his anvil and hammer in front of the works, leaning on one foot and clearly informed by the famous 'Farnese Hercules'.[17]

By 1825, the Liverpool Mechanics' Institute had adopted Vulcan on its membership tokens, in an industrial triad of Olympian deities (Figure 9.1). Seated centre is a helmeted Minerva, representing wisdom and education, holding written treatises, but she is flanked on one side by Mercury (god of trade,

Figure 9.1 Livespool Mechanics' Institution medal (1825).

communications and banking) and on the other by Vulcan, with the tools of his trade, a representative of all mechanics.[18] This personal connection between Vulcan and individual workers in metal – from the manufacturers of cutlery and expensive pewter art objects in Sheffield to the producers of the heaviest engineering – remained strong throughout the nineteenth century. Vulcan's image still appears on trade union certificates of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) in the version of 1916. Designed and engraved by Goodall & Suddick of Leeds, this certificate pictures Vulcan on the right in his forge. According to the 'key', issued with the certificate and which explains the iconography, he is 'more usefully employed in forging couple chains than thunderbolts'. The 'key' also states the purpose of the certificate:

> The possessor of this Certificate is therefore reminded by it of the important part which he, as a member of the 'Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen' individually plays in the vast chain of intercourse between man and man the wide world over, and upon which all progress in Art, Science and Literature, and the diffusion of the advantages of civilization, largely depends; as well as in the multitudinous exchanges of commerce, the source of commercial prosperity and well-being of our nation, and lacking which, life itself in our communities could not be sustained.[19]

The idealism of this pronouncement echoes at a distance of two and a half millennia the emphasis on the civilizing influence of manufacture and its resulting prosperity in the archaic, Homeric *Hymn* to Hephaestus, which is probably even older than the Orphic *Hymn*:

> Sing, clear-voiced Muse, of Hephaestus famed for inventions. With bright-eyed Athene he taught men glorious crafts throughout the world – men who before used to dwell in caves in the mountains like wild beasts. But now that they have learned crafts through Hephaestus the famed worker, easily they live a peaceful life in their own houses the whole year round. Be gracious, Hephaestus, and grant me success and prosperity!

But the peaceful imagery of the Locomotive Engineers' certificate sits ill at ease with the date of its production in 1916, when heavy industry in Britain was deeply involved in producing the equipment needed to sustain the war effort on the Continent.

If individual working men identified at some level with Vulcan, he held just as great an appeal to the rich industrialists who employed them. In 1830 Charles Tayleur founded the Vulcan Works, to manufacture locomotives, halfway

between Liverpool and Manchester. The works produced engines for the local railway lines and also for export to America, including southern states such as Carolina; they were renamed 'the Vulcan Foundry' in 1847. In Yorkshire, the successful metal entrepreneur Henry Hoole wanted to memorialize his own election as mayor of Sheffield in 1842. In 1850 he hired an ambitious young designer, Alfred Stevens, to embellish the buildings housing his Green Lane metalwork business, H.E. Hoole & Co. The company manufactured ornamental stove grates and fenders and won international acclaim with their exhibits at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Stevens was the son of a poor Dorset joiner, but, through the generosity of the local vicar, had been enabled to study art in Italy. On his return in 1845 he took up a post in the School of Design at Somerset House in London. But, when Hoole commissioned him, Stevens drew on his experience of Roman imperial architecture to design a great triumphal arch for the Green Lane Works, one of the most spectacular examples of factory architecture in the north of England.[20]

The Green Lane Works entrance arch was flanked by two bronze relief panels, with near life-size figures staring proudly out from bronze plaques at the viewer – factory-worker, factory-owner or the public. One is Vulcan, god of forges and heavy industry; he stands with a hoplite helmet and ornamental shield, perhaps intended to suggest the arms of Achilles or the armour of Athena Parthenos. The other figure, sometimes said to be Athena/Minerva, holds a palette and stands in front of both an ornamental vase and a statuary bust: she is more likely to be a personification of Art. Stevens was a major influence on other artists and architects in Sheffield, especially Godfrey Sykes, through whose work a whole panoply of metalworking 'sons of Vulcan' appeared on another famous piece of Sheffield iconography. In 1854, Sykes was commissioned to design a frieze by the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute, and he produced an engaging adaptation of the Parthenon frieze to a Sheffield context, substituting artisans, labourers, miners and steelworkers for Pheidias' procession of Athenian horsemen. Headed by Minerva/Athena and other gods, in Sykes' vision the workers of Sheffield proudly wield their tools and push their trucks around the whole thirteen painted panels, extending to sixty feet, of the frieze.[21]

The question of which class – metalworker or industrialist – 'owned' Vulcan is difficult to answer. In a sense, images such as the Green Lane bronze relief sculpture or the Mechanics' Institute frieze provide a hero who can be shared by both classes, mutually benefiting from the industrial production he symbolizes. If he could be made to stand equally for the interests of workers and *philanthropic* industrialists, he can connote progress through technology and thus be aligned with reform. But Vulcan was also used in less benign and idealizing depictions of

heavy industry, where he sometimes clearly personifies the labouring rather than the factory-owning classes.

It must also be borne in mind that, although Vulcan was often the deity chosen to represent metal industries – iron, steel, copper, foundries and blacksmiths – by association he could come to symbolize almost any heavy industry at all. This is particularly clear from a cartoon published in *Punch* on 23 September 1893, in which Vulcan is a miner, opposed to Mars, who represents British soldiers. A months-long conflict had been waged in the coalfields in protest against severe proposed pay cuts. Not only the police force but also the army were regularly being sent into mining communities to quell protesters. Several protesters had been killed by soldiers, who, at Doncaster, had actually opened fire into the crowd. But the situation was complicated because the miners were themselves divided. Some districts (e.g. County Durham) had agreed to submit to arbitration, while others (especially in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire) were adamantly opposed to it. In some coalfields, non-striking miners who had agreed to arbitration were protected by the militiamen and formed close bonds with them.

In the cartoon, the chaotic alliances and divisions are simplified by using classical allegory.[22] Mars signifies the complex alliance of the military with the less militant miners who were prepared to enter arbitration. Vulcan represents the militant miners who were absolutely opposed to any wage cuts and therefore could not agree to arbitration. The conciliatory Mars says to the defiant Vulcan: 'LOOK HERE, BROTHER VULCAN! – WHEN EVEN I HAVE KNOCKED UNDER TO "ARBITRATION," SURELY YOU MIGHT TRY IT?' The two gods meet beside a mineshaft. The areas around mines all over England and Wales had been turned into battlefields where different elements of the working class fought throughout the long summer of conflict. The editor of this issue of *Punch*, Sir Francis Burnand, had been a famous writer of classical burlesques. The cartoon is accompanied by his poem 'A LESSON FOR LABOUR'. Although very sympathetic to the poverty of the miners, it implies that they, rather than the government, are responsible for the escalation of violence, and patronizingly advises the militant wing to come to heel and agree to arbitration.

To return from the coalfields to Sheffield, the unofficial capital of the British steel industry, the immediate predecessor of the monumental Vulcan of Alabama was surely Mario Raggi's bronze *Vulcan* of 1897. Commissioned by Sheffield Town Council, it stands atop Sheffield's Town Hall. The statue weighs eighteen hundredweight; its precise height is not known, but is estimated to be between seven feet and eleven-and-a-half-feet. Nude, Vulcan rests his right foot on his anvil

and holds his hammer in his right hand, and is often said to hold aloft arrows in his left; they may, however, be interpreted as thunderbolts, which Vulcan frequently holds in Roman statuary. For the official opening of the Town Hall by Queen Victoria on 21 May 1897, a searchlight was attached to Vulcan's raised hand. On 16 December 1940, following the second extensive German air raid on the city, the local newspaper, *The Star*, featured a drawing of the statue on its front page together with the word 'DEFIANT'.[23]

The Sheffield Vulcans continued nostalgically into the later twentieth century, even as the steel industry began its desperate decline. Boris Tietze's *Vulcan*, a figure, eight feet in height, made of glass fibre on metal armature, was commissioned in 1962 by Horne Brothers, to dignify the outside of their head office building at 1 King Street, Sheffield. The figure holds metal rods in his right hand. Ian Cooper's *Vulcan*, 1989, a carving on the upper part of a twenty-foot-high tree stump located in Graves Park, was commissioned by Sheffield Recreation Department. This Vulcan holds a bird aloft with his right hand, the artist having been inspired by the sight of a flight of starlings around Raggi's *Vulcan* on the Town Hall, when one perched on the thunderbolts.

Even today, with the demise of the British steel industry, Vulcan has not disappeared from public art. Yet nowadays he rarely symbolizes directly the labour of the working man himself. For Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, one of our greatest sculptors, Vulcan is an artist rather than a labourer. When Paolozzi was commissioned by the London and Paris Property Group to sculpt his own life-size self-portrait in bronze for the front facade of their new offices at 34–36 High High Holborn, London, he chose to represent himself as Vulcan (*The Artist as Hephaestus*, 1987). Two preliminary works, both in bronze, were *Self-portrait with a Strange Machine* (purchased by the National Portrait Gallery in 1987) and *Portrait of the Artist as Vulcan* (sold at Christie's, London, in 2006), both exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1987.[24]

In two other sculptures by Paolozzi, dating from 1999, the complex and increasingly nostalgic relationships between Vulcan and progress and between Vulcan, business owners and workers are ambiguously expressed. The Tyneside property developer Peter Millican commissioned Paolozzi to create a sculpture, *Vulcan*, for Central Square North, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, built by Millican's company, Parabola Estates, in a previously rundown area behind the railway station which was undergoing large-scale urban renewal. Vulcan was chosen to personify Newcastle upon Tyne as the din of Vulcan's smithy and the heat of his mighty furnaces evoked memories of the heavy industry of the region's industrial past. The seven-metre-high bronze, cast in eight pieces, was

installed in April 2000. Appearing as though constructed of bolts, girders and machine parts, *Vulcan* resembles one of the god's own robotic manufactures.[25]

Arguably Paolozzi's finest Vulcan, however, is the colossal fifteen-foot-high *Vulcan* of 1999 in shining welded steel which dominates Modern Art Two in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, specifically made for its setting. As with the Newcastle commission, Paolozzi endowed Vulcan with an oversize left foot; he is again conceived as an automaton – part god and part machine. But, unlike Paolozzi's Newcastle *Vulcan,* which was static, this Vulcan is in motion, striding out across the Great Hall, his massive bulk reaching from the ground floor to the ceiling. The gallery was created from a former orphanage, Thomas Hamilton's Dean Orphan Hospital of 1833, a fitting place for a god who had been rejected by his parents.

Vulcan's name has been adopted by countless manufacturers of commercial goods connected with speed, power, heat, metal, artefacts and construction: aircraft, motorbikes, guns and sewing machines. Yet he also still stands proud and tall today over great industrial cities such as Sheffield and Birmingham, Alabama, and sculptures of him are still being commissioned for public spaces, reminders of both the toil and the achievements of the working classes. He is one of the most powerful of the gods; without the thunderbolts he manufactures Zeus's supreme power would be jeopardized, and there would be no love without the arrows he forges for Cupid. Despite his disability, this mighty craftsman defeated the great god of war. He embodies not only the technological achievements of mankind, the intellect guiding the strength of the arm, but also the reality of hard and sweaty labour. Vulcan stands for the power of artistic creation to speak from the past to the present, and from the present to the future, and for the ideal of a world reformed, remade, through technological progress. He is the embodiment of man's desire to investigate, enlighten and conquer his environment through the civilizing powers of science, technology and art. But he also challenges the oppressive hierarchies maintained by the class structures of the industrial revolution. Above all, he is the personification of sweated labour. In the pantheon of the gods, Vulcan stands alone, if not quite a 'working-class' god, then surely as a god with a unique relationship with the working classes?

10

Nature versus Nurture

Population Decline and Lessons from the Ancient World

Sarah Butler

In 1900 the *British Medical Journal* (*BMJ*) reported that 'Continental opinion', including that of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) and the influential German historian Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), believed modern Britons to be inferior to their ancestors.[1] This appeared to confirm what many in Britain feared: that the urban masses were physically, mentally and morally in decline at just the time when the nation needed a productive workforce and a strong army to sustain its Empire and secure its status as a world power. This was blamed on the rural to urban societal shift and the unhealthy industrial cities where disease spread rapidly and the stresses of modern living played havoc with the physical and mental health of their working-class inhabitants. The American political economist Henry George (1839–97) summed up the failings of industrialization: 'At the beginning of this marvellous era it was natural to expect . . . that labour-saving inventions would lighten the toil and improve the condition of the labourer.' To George, nothing could have been further from the truth: the 'sturdy breed' that triumphed at 'Crecy, and Poitiers, and Agincourt' had been wiped out, leaving Britain staring at the same fate as ancient Rome.[2]

Comparing the urban masses to the proletariat of ancient Rome had become commonplace in the debate on degeneration by the close of the nineteenth century. Histories of Rome's decline were scrutinized for precedents for modern Britain's rural depopulation, unemployment and poverty. Social commentator and novelist Henry Rider Haggard (1856–1925) could not see Britain thriving with a predominantly urban population, since in comparable circumstances, he claimed, Rome's prosperity had waned.[3] The working-class socialist writer C. Allen Clarke (1863–1935) wrote in *The Effects of the Factory System on Health*

(1899) that, just as 'a mark' was 'impressed' upon slaves who toiled in Rome's 'factory system' to prevent them from absconding, so, too, were Britain's industrial workers being 'branded', because who could not make out a 'factory face'?[4] The modern system, he declared, was 'unhealthy, dangerous, bad for mind and morals . . .' Furthermore, he continued, '[it] unfits women for motherhood, curses the children, and is causing the population of Lancashire to deteriorate'.[5] Clarke provocatively asked what children born to 'factory' parents were 'worth' and appeared to echo Horace's famous pronunciation on the decline of the Roman race (*Odes* 3.6), when explaining that Britain's workers failed to reach the stature of their forefathers.[6]

As we might expect, contemporary scientists and medics responded differently from their non-scientific counterparts concerned with increasingly worrying signs of degeneration in the urban masses who were forced to live and work in atrocious conditions for low wages in the newly industrialized towns. They understandably tended to prefer the application of logic, reason and observation to the free extrapolation from ancient history when debating the problem. That said, some, whether advocating a biological solution or preferring a programme of social and urban reform to rejuvenate the urban masses, were by no means averse to drawing on the historical record of Greece and Rome as they tackled an acutely modern problem. The aim of this chapter is to show the extent to which the different views and theories of the scientific community were infused, supported and given public resonance by reference to the classical, as the need to reverse degeneration became ever more urgent towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

I have concentrated, in the main, on the pronunciations and writings of influential scientists and medics of either national (sometimes international) or local repute that often appeared or were commentated on in respected medical journals and newspapers. It is through these that we learn how 'experts' in relatively new branches of science engaged with the ancient world and used the work of the renowned figures of antiquity to add weight to their arguments.

Causes of decline

By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain's healthy economy was seen by the ruling elite to be threatened by an unhealthy urban workforce and the Empire's safety by an army comprised of the physically unfit. One major concern of the scientific community was that cities facilitated the spread of epidemics. Ancient

historians described how plague contributed to the destruction of Greece and Rome. The celebrated Irish classicist J. B. Bury (1861–1927), for example, wrote of outbreaks during Roman times in his *History of the Roman Empire* (1893), including the one responsible for the death of Marcus Aurelius. Rome, Bury argued, 'presents many points of comparison with a large modern capital'.[7] But historians were not alone in investigating the impact of plague on ancient societies or drawing comparisons between the past and present. Surgeon Henry Potter wrote a history of 'The Oriental Plague' (1880) for the *Journal of the Statistical Society* (*JSS*). In his essay, he detailed historical periods in which plague had been rife, noting the devastation inflicted on Athenians in the fifth century BCE and the population of the Roman Empire during the second and third centuries CE by the plague.[8] This devastating disease, Potter declared, was more destructive than conflicts, since it brought 'poverty' and 'desolation' and claimed more victims.[9] The anonymous author of 'Pandemic Plague' (1900) drew a direct comparison between the sixth-century epidemic that raged across Rome's Empire and the plague that had recently swept across India and was now endangering Europe and the Americas.[10]

More destructive than the plague, though, according to American scholar William Jones (1876–1963), was malaria. In 1907, Jones published *Malaria, A Neglected Factor in the History of Greece and Rome*. In the Introduction to Jones's book, Major Ronald Ross (1857–1932) – an expert in tropical medicine – criticized historians for making little effort to explore the 'biological' reasons for a nation's 'success or failure'. As it was 'endemic disease', he argued, in populations that were economically and militarily 'dominant' that brought down ancient civilizations, it was essential that serious attention be paid to the spread of disease (which he characterized as an enemy that struck from 'within') in Britain and the Empire. For Ross, it was neither the Macedonians nor the Romans who conquered Greece, but malaria.[11] Moreover, Ross continued, the spread of the disease from Greece to Italy changed Romans from 'hardy' peasants and 'vigorous soldiers' to an idle population, and evidence of this change in character (according to a note added by Jones) could be found in Juvenal's *Satires* 3.60ff.[12]

In his book, Jones expanded on Ross's introduction and told a tale of Greek decline (in morals, patriotism and ambition) caused by malaria.[13] That the disease spread to Italy was confirmed for Jones, at least, by references to febrile diseases in Roman literature, such as Terence's mention of 'fever' in *Hecyra* (Act III, Scene 4) and the Elder Pliny's observation that Q. Fabius Maximus contracted it (*Natural Histories,* 7:50). Indeed, Jones continued, from Cicero's time onwards the majority of writers referred to 'malaria in unmistakable

language'. Indeed, he regarded Celsus' 'discussion of fevers' in *On Medicine* (3:3) as almost identical to the fevers induced by malaria.[14] In his creative – if not always entirely scientific – thesis, he also blamed the disease for the decline of Greece as well as the demise of the Roman Republic and the eventual break-up of the Empire, since it lowered 'vitality' in both the 'fit and unfit'. In this respect, malaria was unique: other diseases strengthened a race 'by weeding out the unfit'.[15] In trying to bring the threat of disease closer to his modern audience, Jones warned that influenza was a disease equally detrimental to national well-being. Modern Britons with their stress-filled lives and poor diet were especially susceptible to influenza, which left victims unhealthy and immoral, and no country could 'prosper economically' when morals declined.[16] What Jones omitted to mention was the exploitation of the majority of urban dwellers (the working class) by the few (the industrial and ruling elite). It was the latter, who were responsible for keeping wages low and living conditions poor for those on whom Britain depended, who guaranteed that disease would thrive in the cities. The nation was in dire need of reform.

Articles appeared in the *BMJ* and the national press describing the ravages caused by influenza. For instance, in January 1890, the *BMJ* reported that there had been a substantial rise in deaths that month.[17] *The Times* also reported on the outbreak, which had spread across London and beyond.[18] Responsible for laying off thousands of workers, influenza was threatening the economy. Military leaders, too, expressed concern over the effect it would have on soldiers stationed around the capital.[19] Other outbreaks occurred in May 1891 and the winter of 1892 and, like malaria, doctors claimed that influenza attacked both the healthy and the unhealthy.[20] According to Canterbury surgeon Brian Rigden, writing in *The Times* in January 1892, the current influenza outbreak was, in terms of severity and spread, the worst ever seen.[21] Yet another serious outbreak occurred in 1908 in Manchester, and another during the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic that killed between fifty and a hundred million people worldwide. According to *The Times* in July 1918, one London textile house recorded that a quarter of its workforce were absent as a result. Other industries reported similar absences.[22] Naval doctor Oliver H. Gotch (1889–1974) and Harold E. Whittingham (1887–1983), at the time a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, advised the *BMJ* that influenza must be considered not only from 'a medical' point of view but also from 'an economic' and a 'military standpoint'.[23] The recurrent pairing of concern for the economy and the military was evidence of just how integral the working classes were to Britain and its Empire.

Unlike influenza, however, other infectious diseases prevalent in Britain, such as typhus and tuberculosis, specifically targeted unhealthy working-class

urbanites. According to renowned neuropathologist Frederick Mott (1853–1926), autopsies performed on the dead of London's asylums proved that almost half had the 'active tubercle'.[24] Dr William Lauder, speaking at a public lecture in Manchester in 1887, listed some of the reasons urbanites were prone to contracting infections: overcrowded and damp living conditions, insufficient air flow and breathing in 'dust' in certain industries.[25] Public Health Administrator James Niven (1851–1925) also blamed the urban environment for the spread of diarrhoea.[26] He informed attendees at a British Medical Association (BMA) meeting in 1910 that diarrhoea was 'most fatal' in towns during the summer – 'the fly season'.[27] For Yale scholar and eugenicist Ellsworth Huntington (1876–1947), if climate change provided the right conditions for the 'mosquito' to thrive and malaria to spread in ancient times, it was the change from breathing the pure air of the countryside to the stifling air of cities that hastened the spread of disease in Britain.[28]

But it was not just infectious diseases that were blamed for degeneration. More detrimental economically were diseases of the mind and nerves. Although unlikely to be fatal, these left victims unable to work, unfit for military service and confined in institutions that drained the public purse. In 1887, Dr Richard Crean of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, investigating the relationship between temperament and disease, presented his findings at a public meeting. Crean's research had led him to study the Roman physician Galen, who had identified 'nine' different types of temperament in man. This contrasted with the 'modern classification' that gave only 'three principal types – the *sanguine*, *nervous* and *lymphatic*', or so Crean claimed.[29]

A man of the first type showed loyalty and imagination but lacked depth and was prone to ill health and overindulgence. An example of this type was Mark Antony. A 'sub-variety' of the *sanguine* was the athletic type, and examples included Hercules, Homer's Ajax and Roman gladiators, who were physically but not mentally strong. The third category, the *lymphatic*, was 'a degenerate type'. However, despite the negative connotations of being classified as 'degenerate', Crean argued that people who fell into this category were capable of 'neatly' defining 'ideas', and their cautiousness made them worthy of esteem.

For Crean, though, it was the second category – the *nervous* – into which most Britons fell. Persons of this type were tenacious and valiant under pressure. Examples from the ancient world included Hannibal and Julius Caesar, while Wellington was a modern type.[30] Worrying, though, for Crean was a subcategory of the nervous type, with persons displaying signs of 'nervelessness, nervousness, or nerve debility'. As this subtype was not described by the ancients, Crean

assumed this was because it was unknown in ancient times. Consequently, he surmised, this subtype was a creation of the modern world with its new methods of communication and production and new ways of living, all elements unknown to hard-working country-dwellers in the past. It was this rural existence that had fortified the ancients and produced robust races. Although Greece and Rome had declined, Crean believed that neither race had suffered from the 'mental *friction*' of the present day, because the Greeks were not 'enervating' characters and the Romans remained 'free from the worry, wear, and tear' of modern life.[31]

Dr James Russell, superintendent of the Hamilton Asylum in Canada, also blamed modernity for the rise in the number of people judged insane. Writing in the *BMJ* in 1897, he argued that mass production led to high unemployment, which in turn led to a reliance on charity; this was, in his opinion, the beginning of 'physical and mental degeneration'.[32] Rather than charity, Russell recommended money be spent on 'adding to the earning power' of paupers, as this would give them a more equal share in the wealth of the nation and preserve their health. He told readers that 'equality of opportunity' was lacking in Britain, but that he hoped social and economic reform would allow a return to Macaulay's 'mythical period' in Roman history when the land and wealth were divided between rich and poor.[33] But Russell's hopes for an equal society and a fall, therefore, in the number of the poor declared insane failed to materialize, according to Anna Kirby, secretary of the National Association for the Feeble-Minded. By 1913, with the population saturated with feeble-minded persons, she warned that this 'form of degeneracy' was likely to have a greater impact on society than any other type.[34]

Scientists also continued to investigate other forms of degeneracy, including drunkenness, which was something the Spartans wisely steered their sons away from, according to Westminster cleric (later Dean of Canterbury) Frederic Farrar (1831–1903).[35] Frederick Mott enquired into the effect of drink on individuals with an unbalanced 'nervous system', finding that alcohol acted as a 'poison' to those with epilepsy and the 'potentially insane'.[36] Additionally, excessive drinking led to other antisocial tendencies. One of these, also on the rise by the late nineteenth century, was prostitution and a disease that was spread by it – syphilis – which Russell considered would destroy more lives than 'pestilence or the sword'.[37] Another antisocial tendency was criminality. The *BMJ* reviewer of an address to the American Medical Society by Dr Daniel Brower of Chicago (1899) drew readers' attention to Brower's observation that the law, which Brower qualified as 'largely Roman', was inadequate when dealing with

modern criminals. Whereas the 'legal code' had suited Rome because 'the death penalty' ensured that 'a good deal of criminal material was cut off [at source]', this was no longer the case in America.[38]

Of greatest concern, though, to scientists was the growing belief that physical, mental and moral traits were passed from parent to child. Investigating the issue was 'the father of eugenics', Francis Galton (1822–1911), who in 1869 published *Hereditary Genius*.[39] According to Galton, historical inquiry proved that the Greeks were the most able race in history, with Athens producing no fewer than fourteen 'illustrious persons' over a hundred-year period from 530 BCE. Galton's list consisted of Themistocles, Militiades, Aristeides, Cimon and Pericles, Thucydides, Socrates, Xenophon and Plato, the four famous poets, Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Aristophanes, and Phidias.[40] Moreover, having compared Athenians with modern Britons, Galton estimated that the former were superior by 'nearly two grades' to the latter.[41] Although the Athenians declined due to a drop in moral standards, a disinclination to marry and prostitution resulting in infertility, Galton proved that 'genius' was inherited by listing the descendants of eminent Greeks.[42] For instance, Aeschylus' kin were all 'distinguished for bravery', while Aristophanes' sons inherited his literary skills.[43] Another notable ancient 'genius' who both inherited and passed on his talents was the Roman Scipio Africanus. The son of a heroic military leader, Scipio was father to Publius Cornelius, physically 'weak' but praised by Cicero for his mental capabilities, and the erudite Cornelia. She, in turn, was mother to Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, brave guardians of the masses and noted for their oratorical skills and 'virtues'.[44] Other Romans with distinguished ancestors and/or descendants included Pliny the Younger, Seneca the Younger and Vespasian, whose son, Titus, was 'able and virtuous'.[45]

Galton's work was widely lauded. Among those who praised him was his cousin, the evolutionary scientist Charles Darwin (1809–82), who wrote that he had never 'read anything more interesting and original'. Likewise, lawyer and anthropologist George Harris, who reviewed Galton's work for the *Journal of Anthropology* in 1870, believed Galton deserved gratitude from all those 'interested in the study of man'.[46] But, if healthy genes could be passed down the generations, so too, Galton continued, could degenerate ones, and, this being the case, the chances of avoiding racial and, therefore, national decline were slim. This was because the urban masses, which 'contain[ed] an undue proportion of the weak, the idle and the improvident', were contributing more to future generations than their rural hearty equivalent.[47] Again, Galton was praised. The reviewer of *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Development* (1883) commended

him for educating humanity about the importance of breeding to ensure that 'its best stock' survived and 'its worst' would be wiped out. Galton, the reviewer concluded, had 'suggested, more definitely than Plato . . . that there ought to be, and some day may be, a real art of eugenics, which may be of practical importance for mankind'.[48]

Other scientists took up Galton's theories. Dr Frederic Mouat (1816–97), president of the Royal Statistical Society, warned that, as poverty and diseases arising from it were hereditary, future generations would see institutions filled 'with the halt, the blind, the epileptic, and the imbecile.'[49] Richard Crean, although acknowledging that the environment must be a factor in physical and mental development, nonetheless insisted that inherited traits were important.[50] Russell, too, despite his sympathy for the poor, believed that the unemployed who resorted to drink and criminality must produce mentally inferior offspring who would only be fit for 'the most primitive form of citizenship'.[51] Mott also argued that the propensity to drink was passed from parent to child. But, for him, the hereditary theory was a theory 'familiar' to the ancients and 'foreshadowed by Lucretius'. To prove this, Mott included a quote from *De Rerum Natura* (*DRN*) in his discussion of the 'Relationship of Heredity to Disease': 'Sometimes, too, the children may spring up like their grandfathers, and often resemble the forms of their grandfathers' fathers, because . . . from the original stock, one father hands down to the next father' (*DRN*, 4:1218ff).[52]

But realizing that unhealthy urbanites contributed more to future generations than rural workers was not the only issue. It was exacerbated by another troubling tendency; that of the middle class to defer marriage and produce fewer children. Essayist and industrialist William Rathbone Greg (1809–81) had noted in 'On the Failure of "Natural Selection"' (1868) that the progressive strata of society were not breeding to the same extent as those 'damaged by indulgence' and 'weakened by privation'.[53] Nor had the situation improved by 1910, according to Conservative politician and Medical Officer of Health for Hertfordshire, Francis Fremantle (1872–1943), as church records revealed that the middle class and other 'useful' people, tradespeople and the like, had smaller families.[54] For Edinburgh physician John William Ballantyne (1861–1923), one factor that explained the reluctance to propagate was a 'love of personal ease' and 'material comforts', and these were traits Britons shared with Romans.[55] Thus, by the turn of the century, a combination of disturbing factors contributed to the fears of the elite that Britain would soon be overpopulated by the offspring of the 'degenerate' urban masses. The ramifications were clear. Like its ancient predecessors, Britain was in danger of losing its status as a world power.

Rejuvenating the urban masses

Those investigating the problem of degeneration largely agreed on the cause – industrialization and urbanization. Opinion, however, was divided on its solution. Some insisted a back-to-the-land policy would revive the urban masses. It would also ensure that those recruited into the army would match the robustness of their rural counterparts, according to a member of the BMA, William Coates (1860–1962), who addressed a Medical Society gathering in Manchester in 1909.[56] Others, recognizing that the nation's economy and global position were dependent on the industrial output of cities, believed urban reform was the answer. In fact, President of the Royal College of Physicians, William Selby Church (1837–1928), criticized back-to-the-landers, arguing that individuals should be employed to prevent what he termed 'nuisances' and remove 'refuse' in cities. After all, in his opinion, such duties were 'the most important' performed by Roman 'Aediles'.[57]

Educating the people about sanitation was also vital, Church insisted, now that the benefits of cleanliness had been 'scientifically' proven.[58] Conservative politician and chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal from 1887 to 1894, Earl Egerton (1832–1909), agreed, suggesting children should be taught about 'hygiene' and 'health'.[59] Others urged setting up fitness programmes.[60] Coates believed these would reduce the number of unhealthy recruits rejected by the army and, as the number of men enlisting had fallen recently, this was imperative. Coates blamed public lethargy for the disinclination to enlist. Rome, he declared, had faced a similar situation as its population declined.[61] A letter to *The Times* in 1903 also drew attention to the lack of recruits and noted that enlisting men in 'quantity' and 'quality' had been a 'crucial problem' for Rome from the Augustan era. The signatory – 'Veritas' – asked whether Britain would also 'fall'.[62] But, for Manchester and Salford's Public Health Officer, Arthur Ransome (1834–1922),[63] and Dr Henry Simpson, author of 'Climate in the Treatment of Disease' (1887), the rejuvenation of the masses would only be achieved by a combination of reforms: in air quality, living and working conditions, hygiene, education, fitness, and the quantity and quality of food.[64]

However, for those who accepted Galton's hereditary arguments, any interference with nature's way of eliminating degenerates would override the efforts made to revitalize the population. One perceived 'interference' was philanthropy. Even the celebrated author and supporter of social reform, Charles Kingsley (1819–75), observed in 'The Science of Health' (1872) that aiding unfortunates was merely saving 'weakly persons' who 'must produce weaklier

children'.[65] Just over a decade later, journalist and author of *The Problems of a Great City*, Arnold White (1848–1925), although portraying himself as the people's 'tribune',[66] wrote that it made no sense to give the poor small amounts of money that would leave them neither 'better nor worse' off. The only outcome would be to saddle future generations with an unwelcome financial burden.[67] Improvements in sanitation and housing, jails and workhouses, in fact anything that made, in Kingsley's words, life 'more easy to live', were also condemned.[68] Moreover, as the industrialization of other nations further threatened Britain's economy and as the poor condition of soldiers was partly blamed for Britain's second-rate performance in the Second Anglo-South African War (often referred to as the Second Boer War, 1899–1902), Galton's theories on heredity became more popular.[69]

In 1904 Galton reiterated his ideas in 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aim', which was published in *The American Journal of Sociology*. While conceding that not everyone need resemble 'Marcus Aurelius', Galton still believed that 'inquiry into the rates with which the various classes … contributed to the population at various times' would aid eugenicists.[70] Published alongside this article in the *BMJ* were a number of celebrity endorsements, including one from fellow eugenicist Karl Pearson (1857–1936), who commented that Galton's approach could help find a solution to a critical 'national' problem.[71] The famous author H. G. Wells (1866–1946) declared Galton's article 'admirable',[72] while the socialist, playwright and Fabian George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) argued that only a 'eugenic religion' would prevent Britain going the way of 'all previous civilizations'.[73]

Simultaneously, antipathy to measures intended to save the unfit persisted. Galton himself expressed his opposition to 'sentimental charity' that would harm 'the race'.[74] Shaw, drawing on the well-known expression coined by Juvenal *Satires* 10.81, believed Britain was witnessing 'the Roman decadent phase of panem et circenses', and called it an act of cowardice that nature was defeated 'under cover of philanthropy' while 'artificial selection' was disregarded 'under cover of delicacy and morality'.[75] Pearson imagined a bleak future if individuals were saved by artificial means. By this he meant charity and better working conditions, which, together, were responsible for 'our gravest present difficulties'. 'After 60 years of philanthropic effort unparalleled in any European country', he claimed, 'we find ourselves as a race confronted with race suicide; we watch with concern the loss of our former racial stability and national stamina.'[76] For Pearson, any 'sympathy and charity' must be structured towards improving the race rather than leading Britain 'towards national shipwreck'.[77]

American eugenicist Edward Manson, reporting on the 1st International Eugenics Congress held in London in 1912, also criticized the humanitarian urge. He claimed it was not the way of the ancient world. Even though exposing children or neglecting poverty was abhorrent to Manson, he was opposed to replacing 'hardness and indifference' with 'sympathy and tenderness'. Plato, the 'first' eugenicist, as Manson called him, was adamant that Greeks put the state first when contemplating marriage in order to produce the strongest offspring.[78] Oxford scholar Allen Roper, author of *Ancient Eugenics*, the Arnold Prize Essay in 1913, suggested that humanitarianism had created a modern problem because, according to Plato (*Laws*, 11.936c), in the event a beggar appeared in Athens, he would be forced from the city rather than be kept by the state.[79]

Harry Campbell, a physician at the West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases, in contributing to a discussion on eugenics in 1913, criticized the ongoing preoccupation with sanitary reforms on the grounds that poor sanitation strengthened a race by 'eliminating weaklings'.[80] Yet advances in medicine were of greater concern to him. According to Campbell, since man first lived in cities he had been subject to attacks from 'pathogenic microbes' and, even if he possessed Apollo's 'beauty' or Socrates's 'wisdom', should he be incapable of resisting these 'foes' he would not survive. Thus, since he believed that individuals who fell 'short' of the standard needed to maintain efficiency should be wiped out, Campbell censured doctors who saved 'defective types'. At the very least, if people with hernias, appendicitis and other fatal ailments were saved, this should be on condition that they did not procreate.[81] Edgar Schuster, Galton Research Fellow in National Eugenics at the University of London from 1905, referred to the growing enmity between medics and eugenicists, an enmity, he claimed, that had also afflicted Greece. Yet again, Plato's authority was called upon as evidence. Whereas 'the older school of medicine' worked on 'eugenic lines', refusing to treat disease-ridden individuals so as not to save useless lives or have feeble individuals produce even more feeble sons, doctors in Plato's time (or so Schuster claimed) tried to preserve lives regardless of an individual's value to the state. In Schuster's opinion, if doctors enabled weak parents to pass on defective genes, they could be accused of 'being dysgenic'.[82] Eugenicist and president of the BMA in 1912, Sir James Barr (1849–1938), also accused doctors of disregarding 'the future', unlike the Spartans who instigated 'measures' to improve a man's physical state.[83]

It was the Spartans, according to Roper's *Ancient Eugenics*, who first devised a 'system of practical Eugenics', although 'the first formulation in theory' belonged to Plato.[84] In discussing moral degenerates, such as criminals, Roper compared what he termed 'the Platonic' way of dealing with them with the modern way,

finding the latter's methods more humane, although still lacking in 'humanity'. This was because, Roper argued, moral degenerates were as much victims of heredity as physical degenerates and should not, therefore, be punished for their crimes.[85] Others, though, were less sympathetic. In 1870 William Rathbone Greg had complained about the 'fanatic tenderness' towards criminals that prevented setting up a constructive 'system of criminal management and repression'.[86] Karl Pearson agreed. Whereas in the past criminals had been executed or transported, 'sympathy' had 'developed' to such an extent that he feared the nation could be overrun by the criminal element.[87] He cited from Plato's *Laws* (5.735d–e) to show how the Greeks dealt with the worst criminals: 'The best kind of purification is painful, like similar cures in medicine, involving righteous punishment or inflicting death or exile in the last resort. For in this way we commonly dispose of great sinners who are incurable, and are the greatest injury to the whole state.' Can we not, Pearson asked, 'claim Plato as a precursor of the modern Eugenics movement?'[88]

Various strategies were suggested to prevent degenerate births and spare the fit from supporting the unfit. President of the Law Society and former prime minister, Lord Rosebery (1847–1929), hinted that legislation was the answer when he referred to the marriage restrictions placed on 'epileptics and feeble-minded persons' in America. 'We smile at such regulations', he stated, but:

> If the success of the enacting in Michigan is great, if it is found that hereditary incurable defects are thereby checked, that a better and purer race is being produced, a race more competent to people the ideal State which we are always aiming at, are we sure that we shall always smile? Now it seems legislation more worthy of Plato's Republic than of practical Parliaments.[89]

Another proposed method, a method Arnold White favoured, was involuntary sterilization.[90] In 1906, Robert Reid Rentoul of the Royal College of Surgeons presented a paper – 'Proposed Sterilization of Certain Mental Degenerates' – at the annual meeting of the BMA because he could not see what else would prevent future generations inheriting unhealthy genes.[91] On his list of persons who should face 'compulsory sterilization' were 'lunatics, epileptics, idiots', offenders, drunkards and beggars. He dismissed, however, alternative solutions including 'murder', arguing that Britons should not adopt the ways of savages or Spartans.[92] Middlesbrough physician Robert Howat also saw sterilization as the only option for habitual drunks.[93] Schuster, in a chapter devoted to ancient eugenics in *Eugenics* (1910), again used Plato (*Laws*, 775d) to prove the ancients knew of the dangers of drink and warned of its consequences: 'the drunken man

is bad and unsteady in sowing the seed of increase, and is likely to beget offspring who will be unstable and untrustworthy'.[94] Sterilizing prostitutes, however, was unnecessary, Mott believed, because prostitution led to syphilis, and as syphilis caused sterility it acted as 'an eliminator of the unfit'.[95]

The idea of limiting the number of children born, albeit to degenerates, clashed, however, with concern over the economic and military consequences of a falling birth rate. Francis Fremantle warned that this had been responsible for Greece's decline and the fall of Rome and had, in fact, caused the downfall of 'all extinct races'.[96] William Coates, who estimated that the birth rate in Manchester and Nottingham had decreased by about a third in two decades, drew attention to practices employed in ancient Rome and modern Britain to restrict the number of children by quoting from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and a report on health by James Niven (1907). While the former wrote: 'The horrid practice so familiar to the ancients of exposing or murdering their newborn infants was becoming every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy', the latter reported there was 'little doubt that the continual descent of the birth-rate is due not merely to the prevention of conception, but also in no small degree to destruction of its fruits'. Coates observed that only two factors separated ancient and modern methods. Whereas Roman men courageously and openly killed their offspring, in Britain 'the gruesome deed' was hidden and men allowed women to do it. The nation, Coates believed, was being robbed of children. This, however, did not prevent him discouraging degenerates from breeding, as otherwise Britain would be 'swamped' by infants who without medical intervention would have died.[97]

Ideally, then, Britain needed to remain fully populated, but only by the 'right' kind of people. Various methods were proposed for encouraging what Galton called 'the useful class' (i.e. those that contributed to society) to add '*more* than their proportion to the next generation'.[98] John Ballantyne, who believed Augustus was right to introduce laws to offset the disinclination to marry among the superior Roman population, recommended in the *BMJ* that the British government should offer 'legislative and fiscal bribes' to encourage large families, but feared Britons, like Romans, would not be persuaded by such incentives.[99] Indeed, Fremantle accused the government of shortsightedness in discouraging the middle class from marrying so that employees concentrated on work when, in his opinion, a man's 'greater value' lay in producing 'good stock'.[100] Coates, too, believed the government needed to encourage breeding by making it appealing to middle-class women and the 'better working class', who might be persuaded by tax breaks, employment in the 'public services' and adequate provisions, the implication being that provisions were at present inadequate.[101] Pearson wanted

the government to overturn laws which – he claimed – punished 'the better parentage' while limiting charitable aid to '*degenerate* parents'. As nature had been hampered from reducing 'social wastage', circumstances now favoured 'the multiplication of this degeneracy'.[102]

Yet, not all had been persuaded by the heredity argument. In 1870, George Harris, in reviewing *Hereditary Genius*, had pointed out a flaw in Galton's thesis in that the offspring of illustrious men were often inferior to their sires, while distinguished men could be born to parents of little intellect or of a dissolute nature.[103] Galton himself had noted that Lucius Cornelius Scipio Africanus was 'a degenerate son of his illustrious sire'.[104] The author of 'Eugenics' (1913), although accusing pleasure-seekers of perpetrating 'racial suicide', also expressed opposition to eugenics. Having compared moral decline in Britain with that in Rome's Empire, the author asked whether Britons had not moved past Horace's '*Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis*' ('The brave are born from the brave and good' – *Odes*, 4. 4[105]), which even the ancients knew was not always true, as the offspring of renowned Romans could be inferior to their sires. Medical men were, therefore, correct in opposing the legalizing of involuntary sterilization.[106]

Others remained convinced that environmental change would rejuvenate the population. Despite being convinced that insanity was inherited, Wilhelm König of Berlin's Dalldorf Asylum informed the *BMJ* in 1904 that if the children of alcoholics were transferred to the 'healthy and moral atmosphere' of the country this would prevent many following in their parents' footsteps.[107] This was also true for the offspring of criminals, according to Dr Alfred Schofield, who – in commenting on König's article – referred to an experiment being conducted at Addlestone, Surrey. Here the children of female offenders were observed in order to ensure that any criminal tendencies were 'directed into good channels' so children would grow into 'moral' adults.[108]

Embryologist John Beard (1858–1924) called the belief in 'natural selection' 'a superstition' which caused followers to disregard the environmental culprits, namely, poor nutrition and the urban environment.[109] Even Edgar Schuster advised scientists not to ignore the environment when investigating ill health, claiming that the Greeks took it into account when planning a family. This time Aristotle (*Politics*, 7) came to Schuster's aid, because he told of the expertise of ancient 'physicians and natural philosophers'. While the former knew 'the occasions suitable to their physical condition' for procreation, the latter maintained that a 'northerly wind' provided the best chance of an infant surviving. It was Aristotle, too, who wrote of the benefits to expectant mothers of adequate food, a stress-free existence and daily exercise.[110]

During the interwar years the problem of population decline continued to vex intellectuals. American banker Frank Vanderlip, in *What Happened to Europe* (1919), claimed that England had maintained its global dominance until the Great War but, having recently visited manufacturing centres, he feared industrialization had left northern Britain at least with an 'undersized, underfed, underdeveloped and undereducated' race. Supporting his findings were records that showed a third of men were still unfit for military duty. He called the 'domestic situation' of workers a 'national scandal' and blamed the consistently low wages that meant many had been unable to provide a home for their families.[111] With evidence, then, that matters had not improved, some members of the scientific community carried on arguing for measures to prevent degenerate births.

Frederick Mott returned to the subject in 'Mental Hygiene' (1923). After restating his belief in Lucretius' observation that 'the mind is begotten with the body, grows up with it and grows old with it' (*DRN*, 3:49), Mott argued that controlling breeding was even more urgent following the Great War that had seen the able population decimated while the less able survived – a novel situation, as in the past, he claimed, it had been the fittest that survived.[112] Another advocate was the German-born, Oxford-educated philosopher Ferdinand Schiller (1864–1937). Delivering the Galton lecture in 1925 on 'The Ruins of Rome and Its Lessons to Us', Schiller claimed that many of the reasons for Rome's 'decay' were evident in modern society. The only notable difference was 'the pernicious contra-selection of the biologically less fit', which he regarded as a greater threat in modern times. This was because, unlike the Roman Empire, Britain was not encircled by dynamic, if barbaric, races from which new strength could be drawn at a time when the intelligent class was shrinking, resulting in the employment of 'unemployables'. Condemning the Conservatives for being controlled by industrialists wanting 'cheap labour', the Liberals for 'false humanitarianism' and the Labour Party for supporting 'wastrels and parasites' because the party saw 'limitation of output as a legitimate way of raising the social value of any product', he suggested writing off all parties and founding the 'party of eugenical reform.'[113]

Pre-war solutions were reiterated by, for instance, psychiatrist and supporter of eugenics Alfred Tredgold (1870–1952), who advised that segregating the mentally ill from the rest would help.[114] Surgeon at Leicester Royal Infirmary C. J. Bond, delivering the Galton lecture in 1928, called for a 'national stocktaking' to ascertain the 'mental qualities' of the population because the masses were not improving. He, too, suggested keeping 'mentally defective groups' apart from the

rest, along with the poor, drunks and criminals.[115] For sociologist and author of *The Population Problem*, Alexander Carr-Saunders (1886–1966), artificial selection was important, and this was something that had been apparent to the Greek poet Theognis and the Spartan Lycurgus, who attempted to legally 'promote desirable marriage and to discourage undesirable unions'.[116] With many new workers each year 'unprepared' to participate fully in society, Carr-Saunders failed to understand objections to the science of eugenics.[117]

Continuing to come under attack were philanthropists, reformers and doctors. A letter to the *BMJ* in 1921, from F. J. Allen of Cambridge, again blamed sanitary conditions and medicine for the rise in degeneracy.[118] Biologist Ernest MacBride (1866–1940) claimed the old idea of forbidding workhouse inmates the right to breed should be extended, or 'sickly sentimentalism' would see America become commercially dominant.[119] President of the Eugenics Education Society, Leonard Darwin (1850–1943), son of Charles, agreed, arguing that, if persuading paupers to restrict family size proved unsuccessful, it would in some instances be fair to segregate them and deny them the opportunity to be parents.[120] Claiming it was well known that ancient societies declined, Darwin asked, why should Britain not tread the same path when one vital cause of decline in Greece and Rome – the high birthrate among the 'less efficient social strata' – was also happening in Britain?[121] Egyptologist William Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) also compared Britain to Rome, maintaining it was supporting idlers that contributed to Rome's decline.[122] It was not, however, only handouts that Petrie opposed. He was against economic equality per se and, like his contemporaries, he highlighted the dangers of equality – for the rich – with an example from the past. It was Diocletian's 'socialist decree' which fixed 'prices and wages', he claimed, that ensured Rome's best citizens gained nothing from 'their superior ability' and suffered most when financial losses could not be offset by raising prices.[123] Consequently, in any proposal to regenerate Britons there must be 'no Socialistic constraint' on the fit.[124]

Yet, by the 1920s, the eugenic movement had lost impetus. Dean of St Paul's, Ralph Inge (1860–1954), blamed the public's preference for environmental solutions, and complained that anyone, like him, who stressed that nature trumped nurture was categorized as 'an enemy of the working man'.[125] An article in the *BMJ* reported that, although the 1929 Wood Committee (investigating feeble-mindedness) found that eight in every thousand schoolchildren were 'mentally defective', the Board of Control for Lunacy and Mental Deficiency recognized that any neutral investigation would be hampered 'by the atmosphere which sterilization excites' and the inflated assertions of those who promoted it.[126] In any case, even

prominent members of the Eugenics Society, for instance geneticist Ronald Fisher (1890–1962), denied that sterilization 'would *completely* eradicate mental defectiveness'.[127]

One outspoken opponent of eugenics was the novelist and philosopher G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936), who censured individuals in *Eugenics and other Evils* (1922) for believing that breeding men 'like a cart-horse' would result in a 'higher civilisation'.[128] In fact, according to Arthur Newsholme (1857–1943), Chief Medical Officer of Health from 1908–1919 and son of a wool-worker from Yorkshire, as eugenicists had not adequately proved the importance of heredity they should not make any proposals for combating degeneration.[129] Rather, providing medical care, food, sanitary accommodation and fresh air would keep mothers and infants healthy, as would education in domestic and 'health matters'.[130] Scottish-born naturalist J. Arthur Thomson (1861–1933) agreed, although arguing it was education in history, not domesticity, that would create responsible parents. As one reason for the decline of ancient civilizations was falling racial standards, he recommended teaching 'heredity', 'evolution' and 'sex-instruction' alongside 'the history of the race'.[131] A strong supporter of women's rights, Mary Scharlieb (1845–1930), suggested a balance, with women taught history, domesticity and other 'matters' necessary for 'health and national prosperity'.[132]

Other factors also undermined eugenic ideas during the interwar years. First, the contribution of the masses to the defeat of Germany was clear.[133] Second, and despite some opposition to birth control, the use of contraception became more popular and widely available. In 1921 the first birth-control clinic was founded and the Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress was formed, albeit under the control of two supporters of eugenics, Marie Stopes (1880–1958) and Australian doctor Norman Haire (1892–1952).[134] Third, legislation to improve working conditions as well as urban and suburban reform had, by the post-war period, made some difference. The Garden City movement held out hope for the future, and the successful relocation of urbanites to Letchworth caused work to begin on Welwyn Garden City in 1919.[135] Perhaps, though, of greatest significance was the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 and the growing popularity of the Labour Party. Giving the working classes a political voice and control over their own destiny, Richard Soloway claims, 'precluded eugenics playing much of a role in planning for the future'.[136] Nonetheless, during a period when concern over the condition of the urban masses peaked, the members of the scientific community who feared that Britain would share the fate of Greece and Rome often looked to the ancient past, not

only to warn of the consequences of degeneration and national decline but also to suggest ways to overcome it. The texts of revered ancient writers were utilized on both sides of the argument, by those who preferred a biological solution to the problem and by those who favoured environmental change and recommended implementing social and urban reform to improve the lives of Britain's workers. Classical modes of thinking – whether conscious or unconscious – were deeply ingrained in the minds of Victorian and Edwardian scientists.

11

The Space of Politics

Classics, Utopia and the Defence of Order

Richard Alston

A consensus on cities

On 24 September 2013, Ed Miliband, current leader of the Labour Party, announced a radical new initiative. In response to a crisis in the provision of housing, and perhaps to the widespread angst that followed the urban rioting of 2011, he called for the building of garden cities. The idea appealed to the political classes, and on 16 March 2014 George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced plans for a new garden city at Ebbsfleet. From somewhere in the shallow recesses of political memory, the ideas of Ebenezer Howard are resonating with the centre left and the ideological right of British politics. The ghost of Howard himself, however, was not summoned to the banquet; there was no celebration of a 'Great British Reformer'.

There are parallels with a century ago, both in the political flexibility of the idea of the garden city and in forgetting Howard. In 1898, Howard published *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, to what appears to have been minimal acclaim. The Garden Cities Association was formed, and membership reached 325 by 1900. Two years later, the volume was reissued and repackaged as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, and Howard was in the process of becoming a visionary.[1] Garden cities launched a transformation of the British urban landscape. With remarkable speed, the ideas were adopted and modified and, astonishingly, implemented across a range of sites in the UK. Perhaps equally remarkably, the idea travelled, being taken up in the United States, France and Germany, but in forms unrecognizable from Howard's original plan. Almost as quickly, Howard and his original radicalism were sidelined, sidestepped by history, as town planning moved from its anarchistic and revolutionary roots to become a technocratic and governmental intervention.

The Garden City movement may seem an unpromising place to start to think about classics, class, politics and city. As I have pointed out elsewhere, Howard's Utopia and the real 'cities' that followed were often distinctly non-classical in form.[2] Furthermore, the garden city idea looks to be an 'empty frame' in cultural and political terms. The garden city has an extraordinary aesthetic history that takes it from the workers' cottage of Letchworth, low-tech, cheap, vernacular designs, to the neo-Georgian splendours of Poundbury, Dorchester, and the 'new urbanism' movement in the United States responsible for the villas of Seaside, Florida and the Disney-constructed utopia of Celebration, Florida, with their neo-Palladian and classicizing echoes.[3] But, if the architectural journey is bewildering, the political journey is more extreme, from the communitarian anarchism of Peter Kropotkin (and its terroristic fellow-travellers), to the traditionalism and paternalism of HRH the Prince of Wales, to the arch-conservatism of Disney.

Such transitions raise fundamental questions about the relationship between politics, ideology and architecture (aesthetics). In what follows, I outline the architectural and political journey of 'new cities' from nineteenth-century neoclassicism, through the anarchist and neo-medievalist roots of the Garden City movement, to a form of political classicism in communitarian thought and a weaker classical form in architectural representations. To understand the Garden City movement and what has happened to it, we need to look deeper into the nineteenth century, to the industrial cities of the north (especially) and to how they were themselves reshaped and remodelled in neoclassical clothing. These cities were, it seems to me, anti-cities, cities that broke from what a city was in the nineteenth century to create mirages of a different form of urbanism. I argue that the 'new towns' of the early and mid-twentieth century and contemporary 'new urbanism' define themselves by their opposition to the industrial city, and it is this primary negativity that allows them to have such a range of aesthetic and political forms, forms which see a return to the classical in a considerably watered-down form. In the extended conclusion, I consider the political meaning of neoclassical urban architecture, arguing that classicism operates as a discourse of utopianism. I suggest that the more radical manifestations of the Garden City movement offered a non-city, a Nowhere, which turned away from urbanism, both Victorian and classical. It is in the classical form that the anti-city of the modern era finds itself. The neoclassical is a city which builds an oneiric non-reality. I finish by suggesting that neoclassicism, primarily in architectural form but also in political theory (on which I only touch for reasons of space), functions to limit the utopian social imaginary and

to turn attention away from the city of class in ways that make social reform and fundamental social change more difficult.

Creating communities, constructing cities

The problems of rapid urbanization in the UK were perhaps the key social, economic and political issues of the nineteenth century onwards. The conditions of the working class scandalized liberal opinion, while the politics of the working class, emerging first through Chartist and then socialist groups, threatened the hegemony of old elites. It was evident to all that the industrial city was a new world, and a world which many did not like. To an extent, architecture is always about the remaking and reimagining of a world. A building is an intervention in a city that changes the urban landscape, and, whether the building is modernist or classical, it offers a vision of a city as it might be. In the nineteenth century, architectural debate raged around the 'two styles', the classical and the Gothic, with Ruskin being the most influential and polemical champion of the Gothic.[4] Nevertheless, the architectural argument was principally about whether the alternative to the present would reference a classical past or a medieval and Christian past: the two-styles debate can be reduced to a vision of which alternative society was more favoured. Nevertheless, both visions were in their fundamentals anti-modern and fantastic.

In fact, the classical style was heavily, though not universally, deployed in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British city. The neo-Palladianism and the Greek revival of the late eighteenth century offered new versions of elite identity in a mercantile and industrializing economy.[5] The new style never enjoyed a monopoly on country house architecture, with Italianate styles and Gothic revivalism challenging various versions of classicism, and architects of the period tended to work within a variety of styles. Dobson, who (in conjunction with Grainger) laid out the neoclassical centre of Newcastle, also built numerous Gothic-style churches and country houses.[6] William Wilkins, who was a major figure in Greek revivalism (notable for University College London, Haileybury College, and the north end of Trafalgar Square), built houses in Gothic style. Charles Barry designed the Greek revivalist Manchester Art Gallery, but used a more Italianate style for the Manchester Athenaeum, and Gothic styles for various ecclesiastical commissions.

Yet, there were ideological differences. For Dobson, for instance, classicism was a particularly urban form, and he used it for the middle-class housing of

Eden Square and other places. Gothic was for country houses and ecclesiastical projects. Newcastle's commercially driven redevelopment showed the way for local governmental interventions in the urban landscape, and the classical style came to dominate the central townscapes of many of the newly wealthy industrial towns (notably Edinburgh, Newcastle, Halifax, Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford, Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow and Bolton). Although there were significant local variations, the prevalence of neoclassicism shows the importance of the classical tradition within the political imaginary of the time, but also the utopian desire for different cities and different communities.

The centre of Liverpool, for example, was reshaped over two generations with the development of the neoclassical St George's Hall (built by Harvey Elmes after he won the competition of 1839), Lime Street Station (*c*.1836), Wellington's Column (1856), Liverpool Museum and Library (originally the William Brown Library and Museum 1860), the rotunda of the Picton Reading Room (1875), the Walker Art Gallery (1877) and the County Sessions House (1882).[7] This was an enormous and sustained investment in the urban infrastructure of Liverpool which provided the city with what is a stylistically uniform monumental centre, now the William Brown Street Conservation Area. The investment was an act of power made possible by the wealth of the city elders, but it also represented a consistent vision of how the city might be. It was, therefore, ideological.

In reforming their city, the city elders adopted what was almost a universal architecture of power and advertised their aspirations for Liverpool to be a world city, comparable with the great cities of the modern and classical worlds. The city centre constructed a mercantile classicism different from the neoclassicism of the landed elite, not so much in style as in its grandeur and civic origins. The resulting vision was of a community dominated by its mercantile elite, a perception difficult to deny in the presence of its architectural manifestation. It also references a timelessness and a cultural transcendence that represent the ambition of this particular social order to maintain its power through history, an ambition that works against the novelty of the centre of the city that was built over two generations and of wealth that was little more than a century old.

The rebuilding of the city asserted a particular identity for the community and presented the citizens with an image of a new society. The classicizing centre offered the middle classes spaces for socialization (museums, libraries, theatres, concert halls), and the period saw a proliferation of local societies. In giving respectable society a spatial form, it allowed the bourgeoisie to recognize itself, important in a city of immigrants and rapid economic and social change. Yet, the choice of the classical came at a cost. It risked seeming 'kitsch', an accusation of

inauthenticity (of which more below), of putting on airs and graces that did not suit an industrial port. It delocated Liverpool from its Lancashire hinterland through an association with the Mediterranean cities of Rome and Athens and the mercantile centres of the Renaissance. It risked not belonging to the immigrant communities, the Chinese, Irish and Black populations, and, more generally, to the working classes, whose spaces of work and socialization were different. The project did not affect many of the working-class areas that made up the city, demolishing the one area it did touch. In its difference, the monumental centre offered a vision of city which was and was not contemporary Liverpool, for Liverpool was a city of classical aspirations and industrial realities.

Moreover, one of the peculiarities of architecture as an art form is that its monumentality almost always transcends the generation of its creation. The architecture of the Victorian city was destined to be received by future generations as it was in itself a reception of the classical. But in such receptions there were associations with various political ideas, both classical and Victorian, and with past structures of social domination. If the new city centres were iconic of the utopian desires for a new city, a generation later they were heritage, a representation of an old political and economic order, with its associated inequalities and conflicts. In spite of the communitarian intentions of the founders, the classical heart of the city functioned as a monument to and a celebration of the city's mercantile elite, and consequently reinforced the class structure of the city. Although there was no inherent class value in neoclassicism, such architecture came to be identified with certain modes of urbanism and class politics.

Almost inevitably, those who saw the Victorian city as a failure and envisioned new forms of community and class structure came to construct their new communities in a rejection of the classical form. Yet, the men and women who came together in the Garden City movement were not defined by ideological commonality. They were clearer about what they were against (the industrial city) than what they were for.[8] Some, mostly but not exclusively anarchists and utopianists, turned away from the city entirely, opting for a communal non-city. For them, the industrial was beyond repair. Others were reformers, looking to build better cities, but shying away from revolutionary ideologies.[9] It was among the latter that classicism remained a force.

This eclecticism can be seen in the intellectual engagements and associations of Ebenezer Howard, the man around whom the urban question coalesced.[10] Howard was born in London but spent time in the 1870s in Chicago, a city that shaped modern thought on urbanism. Chicago was a city of only 29,963 in 1850,

but underwent an extraordinarily rapid growth to 298,977 in 1870, 1,099,850 in 1890 and 1,698,575 in 1900. Hence, it experienced urban problems aplenty, and was something of a test-bed for solutions to these problems.[11] For instance, Olmstead's railway settlement at Riverside, which Howard must have seen, offered a model of a parkland town in which the only straight line was the railway itself.[12] Chicago was later home to the City Beautiful movement (which was both socially reforming and architecturally innovative) and to the plasterboard grandeur of the great exhibition of 1893, in which a mock vision of a new classicizing Chicago was offered to the world by Daniel Burnham.[13] It was also the scene of political turmoil: the anarchist-terrorist Haymarket bomb in Chicago in 1886 (and associated shootings) caused the deaths of seven police officers and four protesters and resulted in the controversial trial and hangings of four supposed conspirators; the vicious Pullman strike of 1894 damaged the reputation of single-company towns.[14] Howard's interest in American urbanism and political thought can be seen in his bringing to the attention of a British audience the writings of the best-selling American socialist Edward Bellamy. Howard sponsored the publication of *Looking Backwards*, a novel that presented a suburban Utopia,[15] and campaigned for a Bellamyite settlement outside London to mirror the experiment of Topolobampo in North Mexico, which was to fail in 1894.[16]

Perhaps the strongest influence on Howard was Peter Kropotkin's anarchist communitarianism. Kropotkin envisioned a new world of small communities in which factories and farms would be topographically integrated so that the workers could enjoy the benefits of a country life and the fields would be managed by a new class of industrial worker-smallholders.[17] The ruralization of the urban proletariat and industrialization of the rural peasantry offered practical means of improving the lives of the urban poor, providing better, less crowded living conditions, and also resolving the great political divide between the urban and rural poor.[18] Kropotkin's industrial villages were the direct precursors of Howard's garden cities.[19]

Utopianist movements were very much part of late-nineteenth-century intellectual life, from Benjamin Richardson's city of Hygeia with its block-like houses and its complex communal engineering to William Morris's post-urban, post-industrial, delapidated London, through Tolstoyan communes and Edward Carpenter's post-civilizational mysticism.[20] The movement also drew on diverse socialist traditions, such as the settlement movement, led by Arnold Toynbee, Olivia Hill, and the Barnetts, Henrietta and Samuel,[21] and Owenite paternalism. Howard had neither prestige nor connections, but he caught the attention of Ralph Neville, a leading London barrister, who was able to obtain powerful

backers such as the Cadbury, Rowntree and Lever families. This enabled the movement to hold major conferences at Bourneville (1901) and Port Sunlight (1902) and gave the movement the financial power and commercial influence that were instrumental in making Howard's plan a reality.[22]

Howard himself was sidelined, perhaps partly because of his class or partly because of the continued radicalism of his views. By 1905, membership of the Garden City Association stood at 2,500, and it was a more glittering array of intellectuals and reformers that captured attention; newspapers consistently gave more space to the contributions of Neville, Shaw, Earl Grey and Cadbury than to Howard.[23] In 1902 the Garden City Pioneer Company had been founded to buy land, and in 1903 First Garden City Ltd was established to develop a new community. Work began at Letchworth under the guidance of influential architects Robert Parker and Raymond Unwin, and the site was opened by Earl Grey in 1903.[24]

Henrietta Barnett also announced her intention to build a garden suburb at Hampstead, though a 'suburb' was a very different notion from the self-contained communities envisaged by Howard. By 1904, she had retained Unwin to work on the design and had deployed her considerable influence to secure an Act of Parliament to exempt the new suburb from municipal planning legislation.[25] By this time, plans for suburban and new settlements were springing up all over the country, from Rowntree's early settlement at New Earswick and the 'garden city' at Welwyn to suburbs in Glyn Cory, Hereford, Hull, Ilford, Romford and Wolverhampton.[26]

If the intellectual interests of the garden city reformers were eclectic, the architectural style through which these ideas were developed was, by and large, wedded to various forms of the vernacular. Letchworth, for instance, was developed in a cottage style.[27] Unwin's plans for Barnett's Hampstead Garden Suburb also largely adopted a vernacular style, influenced by the 'arts and crafts' movement.[28] But in 1907 Unwin's work was supplemented by a commission for Edward Lutyens, one of the leading architects of the Empire. Lutyens was asked to design the churches at the centre of the suburb. His initial plan for a Palladian structure was rejected, and instead St Jude's Church has a central Gothic spire celebrating a grand neo-vernacular Englishness, while the Free Church looks to Byzantine designs (the Byzantine being a style of which William Morris had approved).[29] Lutyens had not understood the ideological significance of the choice of style.

But there was an increasing diversity in the style of the new settlements. Welwyn Garden City was built by Count Louis de Soissons (from 1920), again

mostly in arts and crafts fashion, but with more than a dash of neo-Georgian classicism in the central areas. Yet, it was as garden cities became an international movement that the stylistic openness of the original conception became obvious. In the United States, garden cities were constructed at Radburn (designed by Wright and Stein) and Yorkship in New Jersey, referencing grand colonial style.[30] In France, where the garden city model was publicized by Georges Benoît-Lévy, a small garden city/suburb was built at Stains, north of Paris, from 1921, which paved the way for several other Parisian suburban settlements.[31] The architectural style was a kind of French version of arts and crafts, ornate and colourful, though toned down in later developments. Even Le Corbusier, before he became the high priest of ultramodernism, tried his hand at a garden city, resulting in an extraordinary marriage of the concept with modernism in the *Quartiers Modernes Frugès*.[32] In Germany, Falkenburg (outside Berlin) was in planning from 1910 and Bruno Taut produced the startling and wonderful *Tuschkastensiedlung* (paintbox estate) and the *Hufeisensiedlung* (horseshoe estate) as part of a drive for low-rise workers' housing. Looking unlike anything else, the estate was clearly influenced by contemporary developments in English architecture (as much by Morris as Parker and Unwin), but also by the more local *Bauhaus* style. Taut went on to build in modernist style, especially at the Carl Legien estate in Berlin, and garden cities were later taken up by the influential, modernist Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) movement.[33]

Although, apart from in the United States, the architectural variations did not encompass a return of the classical (that had to wait for contemporary iterations), the garden city had moved some distance from the low-tech communitarianism of Letchworth with its smallholder-worker model to suburban settlements and workers' estates. In large part, this was due to the loss of political radicalism at the heart of the movement. *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* is a work of practical application (supposedly), a schematic plan of how a new community might work (much of the text is taken up with an assessment of economic viability). It has a technocratic appeal which obscured its political-theoretical origins. The debt to Kropotkin's anarchism was acknowledged, but by the turn of the century anarchism was on the wane, after the Haymarket bomb and the Greenwich bombing of 1894, the latter inspiring Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.[34] In the absence of any ideological coherence, the way was open for a technocratic adoption of the ideal and for political theorists (who very soon became a separate constituency) to take the idea where they willed. It was with the latter groups that the classical found its way back into the discourse of urban practice.

Without doubt, the intellectual guru behind the development of British and American urban studies was Patrick Geddes. Trained as botanist in Edinburgh, Geddes assembled an intellectual circle in London, including the Branfords (Sybella and Victor) and the young Lewis Mumford.[35] Geddes and the Branfords pioneered the use of regional survey to understand and plan settlement patterns, the representative result of which is the endlessly reproduced schematic of the Thames Valley.[36] Geddes drew on a geographical tradition that saw the city as an evolution from a particular regional environment.[37] The imposition of the classical city on the British landscape would seem artificial, and one would expect Geddes to have been drawn to the environmentally friendly models of Kropotkin and Howard, but his formative years in Edinburgh were a significant influence. For Geddes, Edinburgh was an ideal city, and he made the link from Edinburgh to the Greek city, notably Athens. If (Victorian) Rome had failed, the *polis* offered a different utopian classicism, an ideal that Hannah Arendt, John Rawls and Leo Strauss were to adopt, seeing in the Greek city community an alternative to the industrial city in which rationalist, non-ideological, classless politics might be possible. The stage was set for a return of classical *polis* into British and American politics through Daniel Bell and new communitarianism, an ideal that influenced Tony Blair and Bill Clinton ('the third way') and David Cameron ('the big society').[38]

Yet, such idealism was far from the reality of the urban forms that were being constructed in the UK. The post-1918 planning movement came under the leadership of Patrick Abercrombie, the Lever Chair of Civic Design in Liverpool University from 1915.[39] He developed numerous city plans for civic improvement or reconstruction, notably Dublin (1922), London (1944), Hull (1944), Plymouth (1943), Bath (1945), Bournemouth (1946), Edinburgh (1949) and Coventry (1945/1946),[40] and advised on the construction of Wythenshawe (Manchester), which saw the acquisition of 5,000 acres for social housing of up to 100,000 people (Howard envisaged 30,000 as the maximum size of the garden city). These designs preserved something of the garden city model, often locating the poorer citizens in suburban sites with low-rise design, but the issues were technical rather than political, to do with transport networks, with the working classes supposedly being better off at one remove from the centre.

The growing distinction between the urban centre and the suburban periphery reflected commercial suburban development for the middle classes, which was such a feature of the growth of the major cities. These schemes were similar to those developed in London during the interwar period: the County Council rehoused the poor at Becontree, Bellingham, Castelnau and Roehampton, vast

estates which, while considerable improvements on the East End streets, were without churches, shops, employment or public spaces (or often public houses). In many ways, what we see in these communities is a perversion of the reforming ideals of the original movement. Instead of building for a new society, these were buildings for no society, building to contain an urban problem rather than resolve that problem. There appears to have been no desire to provide institutional support for a new society and no assumption that such a society would simply develop in the new environment. Real community, stable values and Englishness were to be found away from the city, and Patrick Abercrombie's other major contribution to English life was his foundation of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.[41]

The subsequent story of large-scale housing projects in the UK is an unhappy one. Social housing estates created centres of deprivation on the outskirts of many British cities, which were often shoddily designed, badly built, poverty-stricken and without commercial or social provision. Such areas often became isolated, impoverished communities whose physical relocation disconnected individuals from their employment and social institutions. As these new estates did not resolve social problems, and, indeed, further concentrated deprivation, 'the planners' fell into disrepute, with 'the market' driving urban development in the last decades of the twentieth century.

Yet, garden cities were not finished. In 1989, HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, having intervened in various architectural and planning issues, committed himself to print in favour of a garden city model. *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* offers a vision of architecture which is also a view of Britishness, of identity and of order.[42] Charles' key 'Principles' are of respect for landscape, hierarchy, scale, harmony, enclosure and community. His preferred style is neo-Georgian and his preferred architect is Léon Krier, one of whose major contributions to architectural history is an attempt to resurrect the architectural reputation of Albert Speer (see below). Charles employed Krier to develop the neo-Georgian Poundbury suburb of Dorchester. Through Krier, classicism returns fully to the garden suburb, though its architectural form is the received classicism of the Georgian form. Yet, Charles' ideas and his sponsorship reunite the political and the architectural, and, in so doing, also appear to return to classicizing ideas about the nature of the political community (though political theorists are not explicitly referenced within his writings).

Charles' British revivalism found echoes across the Atlantic, and Charles has sponsored and published the work of Andrès Duany and his firm (DPZ). These architects and urban planners are associated with the development of 'new

urbanism', most notably enacted in their building of the villa resort of Seaside, Florida.[43] The architecture of Seaside is varied, making extensive use of white-painted woods, airy and light architectural forms that reference classical, neo-Palladian and colonial styles. It is the same limited repertoire that informs the Disney town of Celebration, Florida, where an uneasy combination of Victorian, neoclassical and colonial styles exists in its domestic architecture, and classicism in its public buildings, such as Philip Johnson's town hall (Johnson being another [former] admirer of Speer).[44] Yet, equally significant is the referencing of 1950s small-town America, as seen in the Venturi-designed Sun Trust Bank (1996), which the architects describe as 'flush Neo-Classical' to recall a 'traditional building'.[45]

The new urbanism movement is reactionary and conservative, seeking to build new communities by rejecting contemporary urbanisms.[46] Although its self-presentation remains technical, proclaiming the need for 'common sense' and better buildings, the model is utopianist and political: the offer is of a return to older values (as if they worked) and to the unification of community and land, or to a less dangerous and timeless historical model, discovered, ironically enough, in classicism, Victoriana and Georgiana, all of which can be linked with the industrializing city and its class structures.

Conclusions: Classics, codes and class

Architecture is an unusual art. It works through codes, which send a message like any other artistic/textual genre; it provides a physical landscape for the everyday; and it locates the individual in space in a manner which constrains the individual into particular social roles and allows the recognition (and thus the establishing) of identities. These functions are not separate, but operate at one and the same time. A society is made in recognition, in the everyday of praxis and in representation. Of necessity, the workings of the everyday influence recognition and the reception of representation through architectural design, shifting its meaning over time and thereby generating a gap between architectural intent and contemporary political interpretations.[47] Architectural design and the nature of buildings can never escape from the framing of the socio-political contexts that produce them.[48]

The Edwardian problem with neoclassicism is the same as the post-1945 German problem with the reception of Speer's classicizing architecture. Once the form has been extensively employed, it comes to be associated with the particular economic and political regime. Lèon Krier is undoubtedly right that

the style of a lamp post has little intrinsic political value, but it is also naïve to assume that the aesthetics employed by a regime can be dissociated from its politics: the process by which meaning accretes to an architectural form means that there are inevitably layers of associations that drive the interpretation of architecture.[49] Although the classical cannot in itself support the intrinsic political values of Nazism (except to the extent that all monumental architecture is a representation of power), the choice of the form cannot ever be ideologically neutral.[50] The choice references particular ideological values and imposes those values on an urban community. A totalitarian regime might choose to express its power through high modernism (in early Soviet styles), the vernacular (in Chinese communism), Islamic traditionalism (in Ba'athist totalitarianism) or neoclassicism, but classicism carries within it a set of associations particularly attractive for Western totalitarianism.[51]

Speer's use of the classical form referenced the transcendent qualities of Greece and Rome and, as much as the monumentalization of Liverpool, staked a claim to the historical significance of the Nazi regime. It also referenced the oneiric qualities of Germanic new classicism, from Schinkel's use of the classical for the Altes Museum in Berlin (and elsewhere) to Leo von Klenze's Bavarian Walhalla, buildings whose monumental unreality connects them to the traditions of Goethean classics. This aesthetic alternative to the modern (often both Romantic and classical) is effectively a sleight of hand, an anti-modern stance deeply embedded in a modern aesthetic. The architecture plays on its own oneiric quality, which is picked up in the imagined classical landscapes of Lèon Krier,[52] to emphasize the unreality of an 'impossible' city or 'the city as it is not'. The aesthetic of modernity imagines and builds into itself its own negation, an anti-city, and thereby excludes other alternatives, the socialist city, for example.[53] The power of utopian visions lies in the way in which the discourses determine the social aesthetic and, as Jacques Rancière argues, aesthetic systems determine what we can see, which, in turn, determines the political imagination.[54] Even if we could envisage the aesthetic of a socialist city, it is the classical model that is the hegemonic anti-city of modernity, a city that is ordered and hierarchical and rooted in a particular discourse of Western civilization.

In such visionary architectures, (past) culture is commodified, the conditions of its production hidden behind the apparel of a different cultural form. This cultural form was available through the productive capacities of modernity, both intellectual and material, almost as an 'off-the-shelf' product. Yet, such buildings simultaneously deny modernity. It is because of this paradox that the neoclassical (and other forms of anti-city) can generate discomfort. The unease relates partly

to the oddity of living in someone else's dream, and perhaps also to the strange uniformity of the world that is being created, but also to a sense of alienation.[55]

Such anti-cities generate a sense of the inauthentic, which is so often seen in their reception.[56] Tour the Internet for impressions of 'Celebration', and words signifying the uncanny and spectral feature frequently. The clash between the architectural coding and the experience of the everyday is such that the new settlement runs the risk of being kitsch. If a cultural reference within architecture is seen as empty or paradoxical, the building risks being seen as transmitting the very opposite meaning to that intended: alienation rather than the embrace of a unitary community. This emerges from the complexities of identity politics and place; the utopian city threatens identity, since it attempts to change the spatial relations in which we are socialized and familiar. We do not walk the city freely, but according to the learned rules of place and identity, rules that mean we know where we should and should not be, what spaces are hostile and what spaces safe, a relationship to space that is gendered and class-specific. These rules make the space of the city into a careful choreography of passing people.[57] Our experience of urban places is of social complexity, but the anti-city inevitably reduces that complexity to a more planned model of social interaction. In the anti-city, these learned and experienced features are denied, since the choreography is imposed by an act of political power. There is also a denial of the socio-economic systems that allow the city to be built in the first instance. In this obfuscation, there is a paradox that alienates those who cannot afford or do not want to be part of the social mirage with which they are presented, and for whom the world is not as it is being presented. Be it the classical dreams of nineteenth-century Liverpool, the nostalgic hierarchies of Poundbury or the small-town America of Celebration, all are building the world as it is not, in the manifest and deliberate ignorance of the structures of economy and power that make the world as it is. They are exercises in ideological blindness, the very false consciousness which Hannah Arendt and the Marxist tradition (in their different ways) wish to escape.

Good buildings make life better, but the identification of the problems of the industrial age, and, indeed, of our modern societies, as 'urban' or architectural obscures the rather obvious point that cities exist within particular structures of economy and social power. Social and economic inequality, poverty and social exclusion drive 'urban' problems. Building a classical city at Ebbsfleet might momentarily distract attention, and one can see why it has an appeal, since constructing such illusions is far easier than resolving socio-economic inequalities: the offer is still, as Le Corbusier surmised, architecture as an alternative to revolution.[58] The contribution of classical urbanism to the utopian

dreams of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was made easier by a long history of the idealization of Greek culture, rationality, architecture and urbanism.[59] This myth of the unitary society remains central to the appeal of Greek classical urbanism, as opposed to the more disordered and uncomfortable paradigms of republican Rome.[60] But, in the focus on the *polis* Utopia, there was a requirement to look away, not to see political violence, class structures, imperialism and ideological repression. In such disregard, it became possible to imagine modern cities in which such class did not matter in a unified and ordered community. The engagement with the classical model worked as a distraction from the task of understanding cities with all their virtues and sins, from seeing those cities in their socio-economic context, and of imagining new utopias through which we might make our cities better.

12

Classically Educated Women in the Early Independent Labour Party

Edith Hall

The heroine of Mona Caird's 1894 novel *The Daughters of Danaus* is the sardonic Scottish heroine Hadria Fullerton. She is a 'New Woman' of outspoken views and advanced education, whose name may allude to the Philhellene Roman emperor Hadrian, or to the wall named after him in the British borders. She points out that the Greeks regarded 'their respectable women as simple reproductive agents of inferior human quality'. But she is keenly aware that contemporary young women are still, bafflingly, content to embrace 'the ideas of the old Greeks. They don't mind playing the part of cows so long as one doesn't mention it.'[1] Hadria herself wants to be a composer, but expends all her energies on the demands made by her parents, her husband and her children, like the angry Danaids constantly trying to fill a leaking vessel with water. This is an apt image for the endless drains on the creative energies of women in a society where men are exempted from responsibilities for domestic and familial care.

The ancient Greeks were everywhere in late Victorian and Edwardian culture, the era of the 'New Woman'.[2] The sensual recreations of ancient Mediterranean life in the paintings of Frederic Leighton and Lawrence Alma-Tadema were at the height of their popularity. Philhellenism was fashionable; there was a craze for Greek plays in girls' schools and colleges as well as boys'.[3] Both aesthetes and those new 'New Women' who advocated dress reform wore flowing 'Grecian-style' robes. The new dance recommended by François Delsarte, popularized in the internationally bestselling handbook *The Delsarte System of Expression* (1885), encouraged women to study Greek artworks in order to observe the relationship between bodily posture and emotional expression. Delsartism not only launched the career of Isadora Duncan but was also an impetus behind middle-class feminism in both North America and Europe.[4] When the rich, largely self-educated Caird gave her narrative its Greek mythical resonance

through its title, and peopled it with New Women discussing the ancient Greeks, she was reflecting a trend in contemporary middle-class culture. Some of her women discuss the historical contingency of their status, drawing overt parallels between classical Greece and Victorian Britain. These are far from atypical for feminists (and socialists, of whom Caird was not one) of the time. Such women recited the Euripidean Medea's oration on the plight of women at their suffrage meetings.[5] They would have applauded when Caird used her knowledge of ancient history in order to identify 'patriarchy as a historically contingent (rather than God-given) institution'.[6]

Among the more radical voices agitating for reform in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Britain were several belonging to women educated at university level in Classics, who would certainly have agreed with Caird that women accepted a life appropriate only to cows. But they would have said that the answer was to give everyone, of both sexes, the vote and economic security. This essay is about one of them, Katharine Bruce Glasier (formerly Conway, 1867–1950), but it glances at others, especially Enid Stacy (later Widdrington, 1868–1903), Mary Jane Bridges Adams (formerly Daltry, 1854–1939), and Mary Agnes Hamilton (formerly Adamson, 1882–1966). Two of them (Glasier and Hamilton) themselves published 'New Women' novels, but their fiction is not the focus here.[7] All four were committed feminists, socialists and, above all, active members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which was established in 1893, the year before the publication of *Daughters of Danaus*.

The need for a new, national working-class political party had become pressing. The concept was supported across a range of progressive organizations, from the gradual-reformists of the Fabian Society (represented by, among others, George Bernard Shaw) to the most revolutionary trade unionists. Led by Keir Hardie, the new party's agreed main objective was informed by Marxist economics: 'to secure the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.[8] The 120 delegates met in Bradford in January 1983. The inauguration of the party was hailed as a landmark in both the socialist and the feminist press, including *Shafts* magazine, with its explicit imagery of the classical Amazon (Figure 12.1), founded the year before by Scottish feminist Margaret Shurmer Sibthorp.[9]

One of the fifteen members elected to the ILP's first National Administrative Council, and the only woman, was the former Classics teacher Katharine St John Conway. The tone and aspirations of the convention are conveyed in her rapturous description:

> On January 13th, 1893, the Independent Labour Party sprang into being, and, as a child of the spirit of Liberty, claims every song that she has sung – in whatever land – as a glorious heritage. Life, love, liberty, and labour make liquid music. The Labour Party is in league with life, and works for liberty that man may live. The Socialist creed of the 'One body' is a declaration that liberty grows with love, and that therefore life is love's child.[10]

Since the ILP was committed to universal adult suffrage, it was a natural home for women who wanted to live with men, and have children, but nevertheless felt keenly their exclusion from parliamentary politics as both voters and MPs. Bridges Adams, Glasier, Stacy and Hamilton were, however, all radicalized initially not on behalf of women en masse but on behalf of the poor.

No British women were enfranchised until the Representation of the People Act of 1918; women could not be elected to parliament until the Eligibility of Women Act was passed in the same year. Women under thirty years old and those without either householder status or husbands of householder status could not vote until after the Representation of the People Act 1928. There is in one

Figure 12.1 Front cover of *Shafts: A Paper for Women and the Working Classes* (1892–9).

sense a 'happy ending' to the story of the women classicists in the ILP. The latest born of the women mentioned here, Mary Agnes Hamilton, was one of the five women MPs representing Labour to be elected to a parliamentary seat at the general election on 30 May 1929. We will never know whether Katharine Glasier (hereafter referred to as 'Katharine') or any of her peers might have risen to such a prominent position had they been born under a more enlightened system. We may not be able to answer fully, either, the question of how their self-emancipation and socialism related to their classical education. But this question is still well worth asking, and it is the aim of this essay to do so.

Katharine Glasier has been chosen as the central figure in this investigation for four reasons. First, we know most about her as a private individual. Second, she was a prolific writer in several genres – journalism, pamphlets, novels and short stories. She wrote continuously for the socialist press, including the *Manchester Sunday Chronicle*, the *Clarion* and *Woman Worker*,[11] and became editor of the ILP's newspaper, *Labour Leader*, in 1916: sales reached their highest ever under her editorship, and for a time she was acclaimed in the role. Third, she was acknowledged to be one of the 'gang of four' most influential women in the early days of the ILP, alongside Caroline Martyn, Margaret McMillan and her own protégée Enid Stacy (of whom more later).[12] Fourth, Katharine collaborated on many projects with her husband, John Bruce Glasier, whom she met in 1892, several years after she had become a socialist activist. They were introduced in Glasgow by Cunninghame Graham, the radical MP for North Lanark, and married five months after the foundation of the ILP. John Bruce Glasier, born illegitimate and forced to work as a child shepherd in south Ayrshire, was one of the four most significant leaders of the party, and in 1900 succeeded Keir Hardie as its chairman. He also served as editor of *Labour Leader* between 1906 and 1909. Katharine's position as his wife meant that she could keep her ear closer than other women to the ground of what was, despite its espousal of the cause of women's equality, still a patriarchal organization. Her mere presence on the committee reminded the men of the issue of women's suffrage. To put the sexual politics of the early ILP into perspective, it must be remembered that it was only women who offered to clean and decorate the hall for that inaugural conference.[13]

What was Katharine's own class background? How did it inform her interests in classics and her politics? On her father's side, she was only one generation away from abject poverty. He was a Congregationalist minister, Samuel Conway BA. Born into a low-class Plymouth home, he was befriended by a well-to-do non-conformist family on his paper round. They financed his schooling. He went on to New College, the Congregational college near Swiss Cottage, which he left

in 1860 with a BA and a copy of Smith's *Classical Dictionary* presented to him by the Selwyn Book Fund. His first appointment was as Congregationalist minister at Ongar in Essex.[14] Samuel married 'up' the social scale, to Amy Curling, who came from a much more prosperous family in Stoke Newington.

Amy had been given the same education as her younger brother, who became an Oxford don, and she home-educated her own children until they were about ten years old. Katharine learned French, German, Latin and Greek from her mother.[15] Her intelligence was spotted early, and her destiny as a student of Classics was probably not in doubt thereafter; her older brother, Robert Seymour Conway, was also a classicist, who went on to achieve distinction as a specialist in Latin. He was professor at Manchester from 1903 until 1929. He also shared his sister's bent for politics, although not her radicalism, which exasperated and embarrassed him: he even stood for parliament (unsuccessfully) in 1929, on behalf of the Liberal Party. These talented children were raised in the family home in Walthamstow, where their father, an overt sympathizer with socialism, had been appointed minister of Marsh Street Congregational Church.[16] While Robert attended the City of London School and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, Katharine enrolled at the new Girls' Public Day School Company school at Hackney Downs, where the headmistress, Miss Pearse, was a public supporter of women's suffrage.[17]

The tendency of classically educated young women to espouse social and political reform did not spring from nowhere. Katharine was influenced by her reading of George Eliot – her twenty-first-birthday present was Eliot's complete works. Eliot had studied her Greek at Bedford College for Ladies, which opened in Bloomsbury in 1849, and this establishment attracted other progressive women throughout the next few decades. The African American campaigner for the abolition of slavery in the United States, Sarah Parker Remond, for example, studied Latin there in the early 1860s. This was probably at the invitation of Edward Spenser Beesly, socialist and friend of Karl Marx, who was appointed professor of Latin at the college in 1860.[18] But Katharine would probably have been most aware of Anna Swanwick, the famous translator of Aeschylus, who was a campaigner for women's suffrage (indeed, she discovered her talent for public speaking as late as the age of sixty, in 1873, in order to speak in its favour).[19] Swanwick also supported the pioneering work of Josephine Butler, who campaigned on behalf of the lowest-class prostitutes.[20] Education, especially for women, but also for all children of all classes, was at the centre of Swanwick's life's work; she was involved in the foundation of Girton College, Cambridge, and Somerville Hall in Oxford, as well as the London colleges for women. She

was president of Bedford for a time. But she also lectured at the Bethnal Green Free Library, the People's Concert Society and the Social Science Congress.[21] The sense that knowledge needed to be shared and blended with a philanthropic spirit came over in her speech on the dangers young students faced, which she delivered at Bedford College, 'in no Cassandra-like spirit . . . but rather like the watcher at the prow'. It was crucial, she urged each young lady of Bedford, that she cultivate 'a large and warm-hearted sympathy with her fellow creatures. She must bear in mind that though she be conversant with the language of the Greeks or the Romans, and though she understand the mysteries of the higher mathematics, and have not charity, in the broadest sense, it will profit her comparatively little.'[22] For the women of the ILP, it was campaigning for parity, not charity – reform, even peaceful revolution – which they fused with their classical knowledge.

When Katharine was only fourteen her mother died, and she became independent and rebellious. This caused her problems when she arrived at Newnham College, Cambridge, in 1886, on a Clothworker's Scholarship, as the youngest student of her year. She detested the strict rules and especially being permanently chaperoned. She looked forward to the weekends, because on Sundays the Newnham students – inevitably chaperoned – ran classes on religion for working men, who had been brought to Cambridge for education under the University's Extension scheme.[23] Katharine promptly struck up a romance with 'a postman of intemperate habits', but her older brother Seymour interfered and broke it up; he had been appointed to a lectureship at Newnham, much to Katharine's irritation.[24] Her extra-curricular interests may have contributed to her appearing in the lower ranks of the second class in the College Tripos results in 1889, although women faced a disadvantage because few of them had been trained at school in Latin prose and verse composition, which were compulsory elements of the university examinations. Women were not actually awarded degrees at Cambridge until 1925, but Katharine always defiantly put the letters BA after her name, whether on posters advertising her appearances at meetings or in articles in the socialist press.

Along with many Newnham ladies, she entered the teaching profession, moving to Bristol to become Classics mistress at Redland High School for Girls. There she began to mix with the local Fabians and Christian Socialists. Under her tutelage, the schoolgirls' results improved dramatically: she successfully prepared eleven girls for Latin matriculation within eighteen months of her arrival.[25] How she saw her role at this time is conveyed in her pen-portrait of the strongly autobiographical heroine of her 'New Woman' novel *Aimée Furniss,*

Scholar (1896). Miss Furniss, the Classics mistress at the fictional Brightwell High School in a northern industrial city, has studied at Oxford, espouses progressive views, is extremely pretty and is adored by the girls she teaches. She finds herself drawn into sympathy with the poor by helping a local Roman Catholic priest run his club for working boys. But she also forges an alliance with a working-class shop assistant who has lost her job, Annie Deardon. These two find freedom in the man's world of their time by moving in together (chastely), reading Shelley and William Morris, and committing their lives to spreading socialism: 'Slowly a new hunger grew up within them and a new hope.'[26] The intensity of this friendship, although not its cross-class quality, may reflect the influence Katharine exerted on another classically educated socialist at her real-life school, Enid Stacy. Enid's family were middle-class Christian socialists. The Bristol studio of Enid's father Henry, an artist, was a meeting place for the British Socialist Society, and visited by such luminaries as William Morris and Eleanor Marx. After excelling in her senior Cambridge examination at the age of sixteen, Enid won a scholarship to University College, Bristol, from which, in 1890, she was able to pass the exams for a London BA in Arts (open to women since 1878).[27]

Enid took a tutoring position at Redland High School and came under Katharine's influence. In 1889 she joined the Gasworkers' and General Labourers' Union, which accepted workers from any trade or profession. Most teachers, however, joined the much less militant National Union of Teachers. She then helped the Bristol cotton-workers' strike of 1890, becoming secretary of the Association for the Promotion of Trade Unionism among Women. This strike also changed her mentor Katharine's life. She later recalled how inspired she had been when some of the striking women from the local cotton mills, dressed in white and soaked to their skins from the rain outside, conducted a silent demonstration in the fashionable church of All Saints, Clifton, in which she (and the factory-owners) worshipped. Katharine joined the Bristol Socialist Party the next day.[28]

But neither woman stopped teaching at the privileged school for young ladies until the Redcliff Street strike of 1892, sparked off when the owner of Bristol Confectionery Works, J. A. Sanders, banned his workers (all women) from joining or forming a trade union. Enid became honorary secretary of the Strike Committee and tirelessly argued with Sanders in the letters columns of the *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (signing herself, as ever, Enid Stacy BA).[29] Katharine Glasier recalled later, in an obituary for Enid in the *Labour Leader* for 12 September 1903, that she often arrived home at midnight 'with draggled skirt and swollen feet after

hours of patient standing about in the effort to win laundrywomen to a trade union'. Enid frequently found herself in trouble with the police and was sacked from her job as schoolteacher. With Katharine, she then tried to found a cooperative colony near Kendal in the Lake District, where work and food would be equally shared among the previously unemployed and homeless. But the project was sabotaged by the local vicar, and so Enid devoted herself to campaigning for socialism and the rights of women as a member of the ILP.

She spoke at 122 meetings in 1894 alone. She became known as one of the most effective speakers on the tours of the 'Clarion Van', an itinerant campaigning vehicle which took the gospel of socialism to hundreds of towns and remote villages; its leading light, Julia Dawson, made a striking appearance along with the other female 'vanners' committed to feminist dress reform. They wore loose flowing dresses, without corsets, which they called 'Greek gowns'.[30] Enid did not wear outlandish garments, but was an excellent communicator with working people, often addressing crowds for two hours continuously, in terrible weather and in the open air. She had physical strength and stamina; Sylvia Pankhurst recalled her as a 'big, handsome woman with a very clear complexion' whose voice could carry to the back of any room.[31] On one occasion, when the police tried to arrest her for organizing a mass meeting of the unemployed in Liverpool, she climbed on top of a tramcar and continued her rousing harangue. She died – some said of exhaustion – at the age of thirty-five.[32]

Katharine, meanwhile, in 1892 resigned her post at Redland High School, and moved out of her genteel lodgings into the extended household of Dan Irving. He was a political activist who had lost one leg in a shunting accident while working on the railways in the Midlands. Leaving the safety of her genteel social circle to embrace the life of an agitator for the working class was a huge and risky step. There were also ambiguities surrounding her relationship with Irving and his invalided wife. But Katharine's commitment to helping the poor was beyond question. She took a new post at an elementary school in the deprived district of St Phillips, where her class, with seventy infants, was almost unmanageable. Her scholarly brother Seymour was outraged at his wild sister's rejection of respectability and of her vocation as a teacher of Classics. The siblings were estranged for years.

It was not long before Katharine's gifts as a public orator were noticed by the prominent Fabians Sidney Webb and his soon-to-be wife Beatrice Potter. The year 1892 turned into an exciting and demanding time, when Katharine discovered her full potential. Both she and her former protégée Enid were, therefore, now working full-time for the socialist cause. Katharine delivered her debut speech at Nelson, Lancashire, in early 1892, and in April set out on her first tour, visiting Blackburn,

Burnley, Keighley, Bradford, Wigton and South Shields. She was an enormous success; naturally eloquent and persuasive, her physical beauty, enthusiasm, refined manners and the authority she had acquired through her Cambridge education all helped to draw large crowds. Her reputation was briefly tarnished by rumours that she was having an affair with the prominent Fabian W. S. De Mattos. The scandal highlighted the problems faced by single women in radical politics, especially young ones.[33] She acquired an undeserved name for being a daring exponent of the 'New Morality' espoused by some of her contemporaries. But she refused to be discouraged, and campaigned hard in June 1892 for the election to parliament of the dockers' leader Ben Tillett, who came within 600 votes of winning the seat for Bradford West as a candidate for Independent Labour. She also met the most prominent members of the labour movement, including the Scotsmen Keir Hardie and John Bruce Glasier. Just as important as her public speaking was her discovery that she could write fast and cogently. She began writing for Edward Hulton's radical *Sunday Chronicle*, and then, after contact with Robert Blatchford, the most widely read socialist journalist of the day under his pen-name *Nunquam* ('Never'), freelanced for his widely read polemical *Clarion*.

When, the following year, the ILP came into being, as described earlier in this chapter, Katharine was ecstatic, and married John a few months later. They both hurled themselves into the thick of the political action, speaking for a tiny pittance several nights every week. In an attempt to raise more income, Katharine published two novels, in 1894 and 1896, which were reviewed warmly by the socialist press. She was made very happy by her marriage to Glasier, although at first they pledged to remain childless in order to devote themselves, like missionaries, full-time to the cause. In 1898 they moved from Glasgow to a town on the Manchester side of the Peak District, Chapel-en-le-Frith, to make it easier to travel to both ends of the country. But in the event they had three children, in whom Katharine delighted. She always maintained that it was seeing the affection between her then friend Emmeline Pankhurst and her little boy Harry which changed her mind. But, even after starting their family, the speaking programme was relentless. In 1900 alone, after having her baby daughter Jeannie Isabelle, Katharine spoke at Long Eaton, Derby, Birmingham, Manchester, Ayre, Farsley, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Attercliffe, Pendlebury, Littleborough, St Helens, Hanley, Longport, Stockport, Liverpool, Rotherham, Leeds, Leicester, Kettering, Nottingham, Bradford, Oldham, Leek, Derby, Bolton, Middleton, Preston, Rochdale, Stalybridge, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Pudsey, Farnsworth and Dewsbury. Despite this hectic schedule, she became pregnant again, and their son Malcolm was born in 1903. For a middle-class woman, Katharine suffered serious

poverty – threadbare clothes and frugal meals – in order to keep her family fed while working for the cause.[34] She and John were helped by small handouts from the philanthropic chocolate magnate George Cadbury, although Katharine was too proud to accept a fully paid holiday from him. But their lives were eventually turned around when a wealthy Boston widow and social reformer named Elizabeth Glendower Evans visited England, became converted to socialism, and bestowed upon Katharine (who had played a key role in her conversion) a life income from a trust fund of $15,000. This meant that Katharine could have a third, longed-for baby, which she did in 1910.

Yet this energetic campaigner and devoted mother never forgot that she was a trained classicist. One of her most impressive pamphlets is *The Cry of the Children*, exposing the need for radical reform of the education system, abolition of child labour and state support for all children and mothers. It was published by the Labour Press in Manchester in 1895. It includes moving descriptions of the starving and neglected street children. Katharine accumulated shocking statistics on overcrowding and infant mortality: 55% in the working classes died before they reached the age of five years, compared with 18% in the upper classes. In 1893 fewer than four million children were in school, and 90% had left at thirteen years old.[35] But she approached this argument from a long historical perspective, which added both a sense of intellectual authority and – because she was able to show that attitudes had differed across cultures – the sense that the current predicament of children was a problem that could certainly be solved:

> To those who have read the history of many nations and studied the rising and falling of various empires, it is clear that whatever else has passed away, the belief in the home has remained . . . Men feel instinctively that the child needs for its start in life the protection of its parents' love . . . Attempts have been made, both in theory and practice, to overcome this instinct. Sparta fought against it for a few centuries. Plato declared against it in his *Republic*. In our own day we have a philosopher or two appealing to aboriginal man, and endeavouring to destroy what they term 'the fetish of the family'. But the consensus of human experience is against them. Under the stress of a fierce competition, the severity and callousness of an outside world may develope [*sic*] an unwise spirit of indulgence and special pleading in the home. The false training of our girls may lead to much failure on the part of our mothers. Unnatural or brutal conditions may destroy the best instincts of our human nature . . .

After a revealing excursus on pauperism, the detention of children in reformatories and industrial schools, and the number of children growing up in

acute poverty, she produces a killer argument: even in the brutal world of antiquity, she claims, child labour did not exist:

> Have you thought of the significance of the fact that some 90 out of every 100 of the worker's children have begun to work for their living at thirteen years old, and many two years earlier? To begin with, it is a new thing – the old world knew it not. Search Greek and Roman literature as you will, and no trace of child labour will you find . . . Wherever chattel slavery existed masters knew the folly of spoiling their property by any such practice. In Greek and Rome [*sic*] the nursery was common to the children of slave and master alike; and the trainers worked to produce strong and beautiful bodies, careless of wealth or station.[36]

There is, it must be admitted, little evidence to support her optimistic claims about the ancient Greek and Roman treatment of children, but it is fascinating to find her trawling her memory for details of ancient history which she can harness to her polemical socialist cause.

Like most members of the ILP, Katharine was opposed to the British treatment of the Boers in the Boer War, and became a harsh critic of British imperialism: among the titles of the lectures she gave regularly on the circuit in Lancashire and Yorkshire was one entitled 'Roman imperialism and our own'. At home, as well, she encouraged her children to read widely, and at least one conversation revolved around the issue of whether ancient Greek women were more or less excluded from intellectual culture than women in early-twentieth-century Britain. Her prolific private letters are always full of references to literature, especially to Plato and her favourite poet, Walt Whitman. Even her idealized short stories, *Tales from the Derbyshire Hills*: *Pastorals from the Peak District* (1907), mostly in dialogue form, feature virtuous, socialistically minded daughters of vicars, similar to herself, who educate and help the farm labourers around them. The pen name under which she wrote her woman's column in *The Labour Leader* was 'Iona', probably inspired by Ione, the virtuous, educated and philanthropic Greek heroine of Bulwer's famous novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). The columns examined problems facing ordinary women from philosophical and historical perspectives. In May and June 1906, for example, she discussed stoutness, arguing that in women it was a result not of gluttony but of many generations of oppression and confinement to the household.[37] In a pamphlet likewise aimed at women, *Socialism and the Home* (1909), she recommends thinking about love and marriage in a transhistorical and anthropological perspective, as Engels had done in *The Origin of the Family,*

Private Property, and the State (1884); love matches, as Engels had shown, 'had been a hard-won privilege, after many other systems.'[38] Katharine, idealistically, believed that, provided women were guaranteed financial support from the state, love was the correct basis for marriage, rather than economic advantage, with love confined to adulterous liaisons:

> No students of sociology can deny that contract marriages have so failed to satisfy the human heart, that whether in ancient Rome or modern France the tendency has been to associate them with illicit 'love' unions, more or less condoned by public opinion to the degradation of all concerned and the ruin of the 'home' ideal.[39]

Another series of columns she wrote in 1919 for an ILP paper called *Birmingham Town Crier* featured a fictional young woman called Dolly, who lives with her elderly uncle, a professor, and tries to convert everyone to socialism. Here Katharine allowed her classical training to be seen explicitly. When the professor objects to someone of her class doing the cleaning, Dolly responds with a lecture on egalitarianism, but admits that 'the Greeks were right in the main when they taught "strength for the man and beauty for the woman." It hurts a woman's self-respect to be dirty in a way it never does a man's.' Dolly also quotes Augustine and Plotinus, and contrasts religious ways of understanding the world in the Old Testament with the theories of Pythagoras.[40]

Katharine's perceived authority on classical matters seems to have rubbed off on the men of the ILP. She was heavily influenced, in her relativist understanding of human history and different systems for regulating the relationships between classes and genders, by her close friend Edward Carpenter, also a founding member of the ILP. She cites his important *Civilization: its Cause and Cure* (1889) in her own visionary tract *The Religion of Socialism*, in which a white-haired old man, a fusion of Socrates, Aesop and the Christian god, converts her to socialism.[41] But it is likely that the influence went two ways. After a traditional education, including Classics, at Brighton College, Carpenter had studied mathematics at Cambridge, and lectured on astronomy for the University Extension Movement. But he became increasingly fascinated by the ancient Greeks, especially Plato, Sappho and other authors who helped him to think cross-culturally about homoerotic relationships. Edward and Katharine were close friends (she always supported the rights of people who would today be called lesbian and gay). I suspect that he had discussed with her many of the ancient sources on same-sex relationships gathered in his much-reprinted *Iolaus: an Anthology of Friendship* (1902). It is also interesting to find this

father of British socialist-gay activism translating both Apuleius and the *Iliad* in 1900.

Katharine also discussed literature and culture constantly with her husband, who remained sceptical of the value of university education, believing that academic professionals always tried to appoint right-wingers to top posts out of preference for 'an uninformed political reactionary because . . . they want to set up as stiff a political guard as they can for the protection of their class privileges'.[42] But he seems to have picked up a good deal of interest and information about the ancient world from Katharine, as well as from his close friend and ally William Morris, whom he regarded as a profoundly important quasi-spiritual leader, invited regularly to lecture in Glasgow and even visited in his Hammersmith home, Kelmscott House.[43] When he came to write his autobiographical account of Morris and the early days of British socialism, Glasier introduced several learned references to antiquity. Morris's wife, in her simple white tunics, looked 'a veritable Astarte'. He used to discuss books with Morris, including Charles Kingsley's tale of the Chartist and self-taught classicist, *Alton Locke* (1850). He relished the memory of Morris's response to a middle-class man who objected that the industrial workers of Coatbridge should have found a better place for their famous visitor to speak than the cinder heap underneath the iron works: 'this is just the sort of place that Diogenes and Christ and, for all we know, Homer, and your own Blind Harry the minstrel used to get their audiences; so I am not so far out of the high literary conventions after all'. He also recalled Morris charming his own shy Highland mother, with whom he lived in one of Glasgow's notorious tenement blocks: Morris was delighted to discover that she was a Gaelic speaker, and asked her about the west Highland pronunciation of certain words that had a common Gaelic and Latin root. But it was probably to conversations with Katharine that John Bruce Glasier owed many of these retrospective classicisms. It was certainly to her that he owed his interest in ancient Greek oratory and Platonic aesthetics, and his belief that the ten great thinkers of the world included Aeschylus and Socrates as well as Shakespeare, Milton and Shelley.[44]

As editor of *The Labour Leader*, Katharine received considerable success, raising the circulation to 62,000 in early 1918. Things began to deteriorate after the Russian Revolution, however, as ILP members became split over the question of their support for the new Bolshevik government. Katharine bravely insisted on keeping *The Labour Leader* open to all shades of opinion – a decision which helped prevent a greater leakage than actually happened to the newly created Communist Party of Great Britain. But the conflict, after her husband's slow

death from cancer in 1920, finished her off, and she had a nervous breakdown. On recovery, amazingly, she once more took to the lecture circuit, addressing seventy-eight meetings in three months in 1921. And she continued for the next eighteen years,[45] speaking tirelessly to the Labour Party's summer schools at Easton Lodge in Essex (which the socialist Lady Daisy Warwick, on whom more below, made available to trade unionist and ILP activities).

Katharine never stopped addressing anti-war demonstrations or the socialist faithful in endless village halls and provincial market towns. She was devastated in 1928 when her youngest child, Glen, died in a football accident, but even this tragedy did not stop her for long. She continued to campaign until her own death – for state nursery school provision (unsuccessfully) and for pit-head baths (successfully). Always a careful housewife, she was appalled that miners had to take their dirt home with them. The miners did not forget, and gave generously to her memorial fund, which acquired her Pennines house for the Youth Hostels Association and named it Katharine Bruce Glasier Hostel. It is still functioning. She was also behind the Margaret McMillan Memorial Fund after the Second World War, which raised enough to found the Margaret McMillan Training College at Bradford. She supported the Save the Children Fund enthusiastically. She was thrilled to meet Gandhi in 1931 when he visited London. She wrote more than a thousand words every day. Besides long letters to her family and her diary, she penned regular articles in these years for *Labour's Northern Voice* and other Labour and cooperative newspapers. She was appalled by the rise of Nazism, and wrote in her diary for 14 September 1940 'Germans practicing *swimming* ashore with all their kit. *Storms* in Channel. Salamis over again? God grant it.'[46] Ten years later, on 14 June 1950, she died peacefully in her sleep.

The major impact of Katharine on the movement, as a woman excluded even from voting in parliamentary elections, was through her own words as a lecturer and her writing. The other great classically trained woman lecturer in the early ILP, Mary Bridges Adams, succeeded in carving out a rather different role in reform through election to a non-parliamentary body, the School Board for London (LSB).[47] It had been created as one of many school boards by the Elementary Education Act 1870, which for the first time provided for the education of all children in England and Wales. The LSB was enormous, since it covered the whole of Metropolitan London and had forty-nine members (a number which grew later to fifty-five). Crucially, women were allowed to vote for members and stand for election. The board proved highly successful in provision of school places, building hundreds of schools and ensuring that

350,000 children were in education by 1890. Mary was elected to the Greenwich district seat in 1894, her campaigns supported by many other women, including Enid Stacy.[48] Over the next six years Mary made a huge impact on the tone and direction of this body, campaigning indefatigably for reform, widening of educational opportunity and, especially, the feeding of deprived schoolchildren.

An outstanding biography by Jane Martin, on which the next few paragraphs draw heavily, has clarified Mary's achievements (she had hitherto been scarcely noticed even by feminist historians). Her parents were from the Welsh working class. Her father was an engine-fitter. They moved to the north-east when she was young, and she became a pupil teacher, which meant employment as a trainee in a local school during the day and studying in the evenings. Her own career opportunities were opened up by the 1870 Education Act, which produced a swift expansion of elementary education and promotion for competent teachers. Mary was academically talented and a brilliant communicator; she became a head teacher by her mid-twenties, teaching in elementary schools in Birmingham, London and Newcastle. Unusually for a working-class woman, she also taught older children at High School in Woolwich.

Like Enid Stacy, Mary studied towards an external degree at the University of London, and matriculated from the College of Science in Newcastle. In January 1882 she moved to London to enter Bedford College for Women, where she enrolled for two terms, focusing on subjects in which she felt she had been inadequately educated: history, maths, English and French, as well as Latin and Greek. In the summer she passed the Intermediate London BA examinations, in the second division but with distinctions in maths and in Greek.[49] She wanted to continue, and received encouragement from the assistant Latin lecturer, Rachel Notcutt, a non-conformist who had a reputation for warm support of disadvantaged students and sat on the special committee appointed to offer them advice and support. She was affectionately known by her students as 'Nottie'.[50] But the tuition was expensive. It cost Mary more than ten shillings for each term, and it proved impossible for her to continue.

As her biographer has remarked, Mary's focus on the classics was remarkable, especially for a woman of her class background.[51] But her academic prowess, especially in such respected subjects, was to stand her in good stead: the gasworkers who supported her election to the LSB in 1897 wrote a letter saying she deserved it 'from her learning, great scholastic experience, lucidity of thought and expression' as well as her 'aptness of resource and charm of presence.'[52] Her academic record also gave her the intellectual authority to impress men in the top echelons of the socialist intelligentsia, which added lustre to her cultural

initiatives in the radical Woolwich of the 1890s. She persuaded many eminent speakers to lecture, and raised funds from well-to-do women in London philanthropic societies to support her initiatives. She appealed to the Women's Institute and the Grosvenor Club for Women; she wrote in the feminist magazine *Shafts* (see above), appealing for financial help to support good works among the labouring classes of Greenwich. In particular, in 1899 she organized an exhibition of loaned pictures called 'Art for the Workers' in Woolwich Polytechnic, opened by no less a figure in socialist art than the illustrator Walter Crane.

Mary, like Katharine, was also a polemical journalist. Many of her most acerbic articles appeared in the ultrasocialist *Cotton Factory Times*. Like Katharine, she was also a wife and a mother; in 1887 she married the socialist Walter Bridges Adams, a keen follower of William Morris. Mary and Walter soon had two sons, but this did not diminish her political activities. She was enthused by the strike of the match girls in 1888 and of the gasworkers in 1889. Like Enid Stacy, despite being a teacher, it was the Gas Workers' and General Labourers Union that Mary joined. Like Katharine Glasier, she formed an alliance with the charismatic one-legged firebrand Dan Irving, with whom she toured the mill towns of Lancashire in 1907–8.[53]

It was when her husband died in 1900 that Mary gave up teaching and membership of the LSB to become a full-time propagandist for socialism. In 1903–4 she became a political secretary for Lady Warwick, whom she recruited for the Socialist Democratic Federation. This enabled her to focus on the issue perhaps dearest to her heart – adult education. She believed that working-class adults needed a specific curriculum which would educate them politically and prepare them for class struggle. She therefore objected to the classical and liberal educational philosophy which underlay the foundation of both Ruskin College in Oxford (1899) and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), under the aegis of Albert Mansbridge, in 1903. Mary was unimpressed. She was convinced that there was no alternative but for all the universities – Oxford and Cambridge included – to pass into state ownership and come under popular control. The endowed seats of learning, she argued, were 'the rightful inheritance of the people'.[54]

Mary was at the centre of the conflict between the WEA 'liberals' and the rebellious Marxist socialists who formed the revolutionary Plebs League and Central Labour College (CLC). Supported by the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation, the CLC found its physical headquarters in Earls' Court, London. Mary immediately responded by opening an equivalent establishment for women close by, the Women's College and Socialist Education

Centre in Bebel House, into which she moved as Principal. Along with the working-class Manchester novelist Ethel Carnie, she taught women workers literacy and numeracy, and, through the Bebel House Rebel Pen Club, how to write propaganda.[55] Mary thus used her brief university-level education to lend authority to her candidacy in elections and her campaigns for adult self-improvement. But she was conflicted about the place of classics in mass education. She was criticized for sending her son William to a private school, albeit a progressive one (Bedales), which had partly been founded on the principle of reaction *against* the exclusive classical curriculum of the old public schools.[56] William studied at Worcester College, Oxford and enjoyed a successful career as a theatre director. He even directed Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* at Covent Garden in 1936.

Because the great ILP orators rarely committed their speeches to writing, preferring to extemporize and interact with their audiences, it is difficult for us to recreate the effect of their public performances. Katharine's style seems to have been more earnest and charismatic, with echoes of her non-conformist father's preaching. Mary had an acerbic wit and could reduce audiences to laughter as well as tears. Having cut herself in the kitchen, she declared that she had no intention of being told what to do by a sardine can; she explained that she had joined the Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers because she worked 'in gas on the platform' and was a General Labourer at home. But both Katharine and Mary saw their activism of several decades bear fruit in 1929, when one hundred and forty-seven members of the ILP, including a small group of women, were elected to seats at the general election.

We will never know how many individuals were inspired to join the socialist cause by their legendary oratory. One we do know about was Hannah Mitchell, the Bolton seamstress who was inspired by Katharine and became a famous suffragette, socialist, autodidact and Manchester City Councillor;[57] her autobiography, *The Hard Way Up* (1968), paints the most vivid portrait of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Another Glasier convert was one of the women who were elected Labour MPs in 1929, Ellen Wilkinson, 'Red Ellen', who had joined the ILP as a teenager after hearing Katharine give a speech. Wilkinson was appointed parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health. But Katharine would perhaps have been most delighted by the election of Mary Agnes Hamilton, a Newnham classicist, whose own mother, Margaret ('Daisy') Duncan, had been one of the earliest students at Newnham when they were taught at Norwich House in Cambridge back in 1877–8. Mary Agnes later dedicated her account of the early days of Newnham to her mother's memory,

and no doubt most of it was based on anecdotes she had heard at her mother's knee.[58]

Mary Agnes was born in 1882. Her father was a professor of philosophical logic at Owens College (later to be incorporated into the University of Manchester). After education at girls' high schools, Mary Agnes arrived at Newnham College in 1901, to read Classics and history. She achieved first-class marks. She then took up a position as assistant to a history professor at the University College of South Wales in Cardiff, married, and separated soon afterwards (she was the only woman discussed in this article who did *not* embrace marriage and motherhood). Mary Agnes subsequently embarked on a new career as a writer and journalist. But, before her employment as correspondent on women's suffrage and reform of the poor law at *The Economist* in 1913, she was already earning a living from her pen, writing novels about the travails of the New Woman and high-end 'popular' books about ancient Greece and Rome for OUP's Clarendon Press. Her *Greek Legends* (1912) is an exceptionally well-written prose retelling of the Hesiodic *Theogony* and the stories of Theseus, Thebes, Perseus, Heracles, the Argonauts, Meleager, Bellerophon and the Trojan War. It is intriguing, given Mary Agnes' feminism, that every single visual illustration is not of a hero but of a heroine or goddess (Demeter of Cnidus, Mourning Athena, Medusa and the Venus of Melos), except for two which portray husbands and wives together (Zeus and Hera, Orpheus and Eurydice). Her history of the ancient world (1913) is accessible and accurate; with useful maps and timelines, it covers the entire history of the Greeks and Romans from Hissarlik to Julius Caesar. Both books were successful and reissued in new editions. In the 1920s she wrote two more books about the ancient world for a general audience, *Ancient Rome: the Lives of Great Men* (1922) and a new book about Greece (1926). Being an acknowledged expert in the history of the classical world lent authority to her stream of books on politics and political figures; these included biographies of Abraham Lincoln, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle and Ramsay MacDonald, as well as a lucid textbook, *The Principles of Socialism*, published 'with notes for lecturers and class leaders' as the second in the ILP's series of study courses.

In the 1923 general election, Mary Agnes was an unsuccessful candidate. Thereafter her grasp of history and her writing skills were put to the cause of Labour with *Fit to Govern!* (1924), her proud celebration of the first Labour government, containing brief biographies of the members of the Cabinet. It was designed as a retort to Winston Churchill's assertion that the people leading Labour were 'unfit to govern'.[59] Under the pseudonym of 'Iconoclast', Hamilton

either celebrates their working-class backgrounds (for example, in the case of Arthur Henderson) or congratulates men educated at public school for coming to espouse socialism (such as Charles Philips Trevelyan, alumnus of Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge). Above all, she writes a powerful panegyric to Margaret Grace Bondfield, one of the earliest women to achieve executive power in the British democracy, as under-secretary for Labour. How gratifying it must have been when it was Mary Agnes's own turn to be swept to victory in Blackburn in 1929, having won the trust of the trade unions there, and gaining more votes than any other woman Labour candidate. The patriarchal exclusion of women from parliament had indeed turned out, as Mona Caird's articulate feminist in *The Daughters of Danaus* had been so well aware, to have been historically contingent. Against so many odds, the ILP women, classically educated or not, had finally taken up their rightful place in parliamentary politics.

13

The Greeks of the WEA

Realities and Rhetorics in the First Two Decades[1]

Barbara Goff

The parliament that convened after the Labour victory of 1945 boasted fifty-six members who were or had been active in the WEA (Workers' Educational Association), either as tutors or as students.[2] Since 1903 the organization had campaigned for the rights of working-class people to higher education, as well as supporting numerous other reforming measures such as the reduction of children's working hours and the establishment of school clinics.[3] The profile of the 1945 parliament thus recognised the Association's success and consolidated its claim to be part of mainstream British life. But were the Greek and Roman classics any part of the WEA's progressive remit? Preliminary research by John Holford, presented at the British Academy conference on 'Classics and Class' in 2010, concluded that classics had minimal presence in the work of the WEA. I shall suggest, instead, that, at least during the first two decades of the WEA's history, classics was a persistent, if minor, part of its activities. More strikingly, there is a contrast between the modest presence of classics as a taught subject and the rhetorical force which reference to classics could wield in the various discourses of the WEA, such as its magazine *The Highway*. This rhetoric is deployed both by the working-class founders of the WEA and by the academics who supported it, who included surprisingly many classicists. Or is it so surprising? I shall close by questioning whether classicists supported the WEA because of the liberal tradition within Hellenism or because of the increasingly precarious institutional position of the discipline.

What was the WEA?

The WEA currently advertises itself as the 'largest voluntary sector provider of adult education' with a 'special mission' 'to provide educational opportunities to

adults facing social and economic disadvantage'.[4] While this kind of social commitment is lamentably still necessary, it was even more so at the time of the WEA's foundation by Albert Mansbridge, a clerk and lay reader. Although the 'Workers' component of the name is perhaps by now more redolent of tradition than of class-consciousness or a revolutionary agenda, the distinction was essential in 1903. The Association had the express aim of 'promoting the higher education of working people' in a context where the state had only just begun to involve itself in secondary education, via the 1902 Education Act.[5] The WEA brought together strands of working-class educational activity which were already underway, but relaunched them in more radical fashion. Trade unions and cooperatives were already undertaking some educational activity, and the WEA also built on the achievement of bodies like the Working Men's College, the Mechanics' Institutes and the University Settlements.[6] From the other direction, the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London were already experimenting with university extension lectures, sending lecturers into communities which lacked any higher education, to give courses to all comers. Several of these enterprises had been criticized by sections of the working classes for being too 'top-down'; for instance, Mechanics' Institutes were accused of not permitting free discussion.[7]

When the WEA put the various initiatives together, it forged a new enterprise which, crucially, put workers' organizations themselves at the heart of provision. Those who had been denied higher education because of poverty and deprivation would now organize their own classes, in conjunction with sympathetic university tutors, and would retain control over all aspects of the process. The education thus purveyed would not necessarily lead to individual certification and progress into professions, but would provide a 'leaven', in the contemporary vocabulary, that would allow a whole class to 'rise'.[8] Although the WEA never proclaimed any revolutionary ambitions, its genesis was revolutionary; it treated higher education as a right to which all who wanted it were entitled, and it took the form of an alliance between lecturers and workers in which the former did not have a monopoly on power or authority.

The Association grew exponentially in the decades after its founding, and in 1946–7, at its peak, it ran over 5,000 classes and reached over 100,000 students.[9] The nature of the classes was particularly important for the identity and self-representation of the Association. The hallmark was the university tutorial class, which required workers to sign up for three years and to produce regular written work. This was an enormous commitment for people who were struggling with physically demanding jobs, low wages, imposed overtime, periods of

unemployment, little or no study space, and little educational experience beyond the compulsory primary years. The tutorial class was convened on a topic chosen by the worker-students, with a tutor whom they approved, and it proceeded with an hour's lecture followed by an hour of discussion. The ethos of the Association was that all participants were entitled to an equal and respectful hearing of their contributions, with no 'party line'. There is endless testimony in the documents of the WEA as to how life-changing such an experience could be. Its radicalism can be measured by the fact that in 1903, when the Association was founded, no woman had the vote, and not all men – yet in the context of the WEA all were potentially considered able to profit by and contribute to a serious and demanding course of education.

My account of the WEA will concentrate on its first two decades. In the following two, the WEA became an established part of national life, and after that, commentators agree, began to fall victim to its own success.[10] An alignment with the British left was consolidated in the 1945 election, but, despite this connection, the WEA always insisted that it was non-party political and open to all points of view. Since early-twentieth-century workers were quite likely to identify with the reforming left tradition in British politics, this particular tenet of the Association often led to tension and contradiction in its discourse. There is a long-standing and sometimes 'bloodstained' debate over whether the WEA co-opted the workers' natural revolutionary fervour, drew them away from Marxist analysis or action, and thus became an unwitting tool of the establishment.[11] Roger Fieldhouse considered that access to public money was explicitly made 'conditional on good behaviour', which was the same as 'not unduly upsetting the status quo'.[12] Thus, the education on offer in the WEA could not challenge the tenets of capitalism and the broadly liberal consensus that prevailed during the Edwardian period; it could not work for social change except in so far as change would follow necessarily on wider access to education.

Fieldhouse's analysis is seconded by that of Stuart Macintyre, who states baldly that 'The WEA was the chief instrument of this state policy of adult education.'[13] He goes on to explain his position: 'In essence the mission of the WEA was to break down the isolation of working-class students and integrate them in a national culture; in political terms the proletarian intellectual was encouraged to widen his narrow class horizons for a broader progressive polity.'[14] Without impugning the motives of the WEA founders, then, Macintyre suggests that the broadly liberal outlook of the WEA, coupled with its determination to be non-partisan, meant that it was unlikely to foster class-conscious analysis or

action. These accounts of the WEA's co-option, however, are modified by others, such as that of Lawrence Goldman.[15] He concedes that the WEA 'bought its durability' at the expense of a radical agenda, but cites a number of other elements in British society which also decreased the likelihood of revolutionary thought or action among the working class.[16]

The tension between acknowledging and resisting a left identity is legible in many documents of the WEA. Other related tensions, which became actual shifts over time, include the relationship between subjects of study that appeared to lead more directly to political change and social reform, and subjects that were more cultural or literary. Initially, workers signed up in droves for classes on economics and industrial history, but, as the twentieth century wore on, more classes were devoted to literature, music and art. A second change was that the university tutorial class lost some popularity to shorter, less demanding courses, an alteration that for some commentators diluted the essence of the WEA and for others made it even more accessible to working people.[17] A further significant change was that women, who had formed a very small proportion of the earliest classes, later came to predominate. Goldman concludes that one of the WEA's major achievements was to educate women, 'the most important group of the educationally under-privileged'.[18] These changes, especially those from 'politics' to 'culture' and from male to female, have fed the perception that the WEA began as a revolutionary enterprise but became compromised. But it may be more accurate to conclude that after the 'golden age' of the 1930s and 1940s, because higher education had become much more widely available, the WEA had essentially realized its early reforming aims.[19]

Class itself was often a challenge to the WEA, and it is fair to say that, despite the best intentions, as the student body expanded, manual workers lost their majority position.[20] The Final Report of the 1919 Adult Education Committee found that, out of over 3,000 university tutorial class students, fewer than 400 were not from the working class, but this situation did not persist.[21] The records, which may not be completely reliable,[22] do not always type students in very helpful ways, but 'home workers', probably women, form a huge proportion of students at most times, as do shopworkers, clerical workers and teachers. Despite the name, then, the WEA has often been typed as a middle-class institution.[23] That said, we should not conclude that any classical teaching on offer was available only to people who already had some grasp of the ancient world. Clerks, shopworkers and even teachers could identify with the manual working class in terms of low pay and demanding conditions, and, by the same token, cannot be assumed to have had prior acquaintance with classical antiquity.[24]

Was there classics at the WEA?

What role would the discipline of classics be likely to have had in the WEA? The Annual Reports suggest that, while very few classes were ever titled 'Ancient Greece and Rome', classical antiquity had a notable presence via courses centred on other topics. Most regions, in most years, hosted at least one course on something like the history of civilization, and many regions, in many years, hosted a course on a topic such as 'What we owe to ancient Greece' or 'Ancient Greek life and thought'.[25] This is one measure of the importance of the classical world to the students. But another point to note is that Ancient Greece and Rome wielded considerable ideological clout in the discourse of *The Highway* and other documents, as an index of workers' exclusion from higher education, and, conversely, as a sign of a higher 'national culture', to which workers were entitled and to which they would now be able to gain access. While the absence of classics from the discourses of the WEA may thus not be absolute, there is still a contrast between its relatively low-key presence in the classes and the rhetorical force with which it can be invoked.

Latin and Greek were, of course, not simply *symbolic* of workers' exclusion from higher education; up until 1920 Greek was compulsory for entry to Oxford and Cambridge (as was Latin till the 1960s). Classics may be seen as symptomatic of the shift between 'politics' and 'culture', because the institutional position of compulsory Greek made culture into politics; those unable to learn the ancient languages, by whatever means, were actually barred from the commanding heights of the national life. How one normally learned Latin and Greek was by attending a secondary school, often a fee-paying one, so that the ancient languages usually consolidated a class identity based on family wealth, ensuring that only those with money acquired education. In the early decades of the twentieth century, it was consequently extremely rare for any person of humble origins to penetrate the ancient universities, and, in fact, entry to university was never the chief goal of the WEA. Albert Mansbridge freely admitted the WEA's inability to teach certain subjects: 'The range of subjects is limited to those which do not demand a long period of school education; for instance, mathematics and languages are beyond this range.'[26] My research has turned up only very sparse ancient language teaching, which may often have been down to a very particular conjunction of tutor and students, or, sometimes, student.

Even though there were hardly any ancient languages at the WEA, there is substantial evidence suggesting that the classical world was widely available to WEA students, but emerges into the archival record only under certain

conditions. Certain titles of classes indicate that the ancient world would play a role in their content: 'Utopias Ancient and Modern', for instance, or the 'History of Political Thought', the 'History of Drama', the 'Development of Europe'. There are also several instances of events with a classical focus that are not part of regular courses. Some of these may have had an almost 'talismanic' quality, marking the importance of the new enterprise.[27] Thus, the opening programme of the Reading branch, in 1904, comprised two lectures on 'The Teaching of Socrates', as well as a demonstration of chemistry, a debate, two musical evenings, and lectures on 'English Liberty', 'William Cobbett' and 'Pictures'.[28] In 1908 the Rochdale branch, one of the first to be founded, hosted a course on 'Imperial Rome', which was pronounced an experiment, but was successful.[29] Similar language is used of a class in 'Greek History' which ran in Manchester in 1914: 'All the students are keen about the experiment being continued next autumn.'[30]

In 1913 the course of winter lectures at Belfast included three by Sir Samuel Dill on 'The Possibilities of Higher Literary Studies for Workers'. Remarkably, all these possibilities centre on the study of the ancient world.[31] The ancient world is also prominent in the syllabi of several of the annual summer schools. Gilbert Murray read his translation of *Medea* to a spellbound summer class in 1911, and one student, Lavena Saltonstall, suggests that 'neither is Mr Lindsay likely to forget our discussions of Plato's *Republic*, nor the manner in which we often attacked him as though he had written it himself'.[32] Later, *The Highway* of 1915 announces a summer school on ancient Greece in the following terms:

> In this time of travail and anguish of the nations, it is not so much relief and distraction that we seek . . . as a renewed power of realising, in and below the present storm and havoc the abiding issues of life that underlie and will survive them . . . [the Greeks] can even yet 'purge the emotions of pity and terror in our souls' by bringing each man's own sense of compassion and apprehension into relation with the universal sufferings and aspirations of humanity, and with that august overruling march of destiny or providence which we so dimly gauge. No study could better tend to ennoble our sorrows and purify our resolves.[33]

The rhetoric is inclusive, with a fully realized 'we' throughout, so that there is no sense that *The Highway*'s audience might have felt excluded from the classics. There is also, perhaps, an implication that the audience would not normally turn to the classical world for its self-understanding, but does so under the compulsion of crisis.

Such testimony shows that classical material was available, even if sometimes it appeared as an anomalous 'experiment'. But what about evidence that the ancient world was part of regular activity? There are a few such indications. In the early 1910s G. D. H. Cole, one of the university tutors, was answering students' bibliographic queries about support for their studies in a column called 'At the sign of the book'. His topics include – as well as quantities of history, economics and politics – Plato's *Republic*, Latin, Roman history, and classical myths.[34] Several other different kinds of contributions, such as book reviews, suggest that the audience of *The Highway* are reading the classics, or are interested in the classics generally. For now we can note a letter, which purports to come from a student, and which suggests regular discussion of classical topics. This letter also lays claim to the classics as being particularly pertinent to working-class students.

The letter is from 'A Wayfaring Man' and is titled 'The Spirit of the WEA'.[35] It celebrates the 'fellowship' found in the branches, which depends on free interchange among members, no automatic guarantee of authority to the lecturer, and a certain level of political awareness. The ideal is illustrated with specific reference to classical antiquity:

> Literature, economic history, nature study, philosophy, ethics, even theology, were made studies of the humanities and the modernities. We were not dry-as-dust doctrinaires poking among the ashes of extinct theories and dead civilisations, but pioneers of truths to live by and save the civilisation of to-day. If some rather bold democrat was studying Greek history and ventured to suggest that Cleon was like some modern statesman, whom he named, our tutor did not choke him by an extinguisher, but mildly marked out the points of similarity and the points of difference between the modern and the ancient types of demagogue . . .
>
> The mercantile system suggests Daniel de Leon, Wordsworth's Sonnets lead to small holdings and the iniquity of land grabbers, Napoleon reminds one of the Kaiser, Greek art recalls Brick Row in our village. The WEA does not stand for the utter repudiation of these connections.
>
> If I understand the fundamental motive of our pioneers . . . Brick Row is not so remote from Greek art in the thought world. The thought of a Greek statue should arouse in all sane minds the stern resolve that Brick Row should be smashed to atoms.

This is an idealized version of the WEA, but the 'Wayfaring Man' claims that it is frequently instantiated. In this extract, at least, the best version of the WEA

makes positive connections between the classics and the working class, and they are even dynamically linked, in that the one will ideally lead to the end of the other.

Where was the classics at the WEA?

Such testimony as that of the 'Wayfaring Man' makes a start on suggesting that WEA students could have regular access to classical material. The archives also make it relatively clear that exposure to the ancient world, when it happened, often came via Plato. Whenever we are able to scrutinize the content of a philosophy class in any detail, Plato is almost certain to form a prominent part of the reading. In 1913 the editor of *The Highway* visited the class at Reading, where the students, mostly employees of the Cooperative, 'were forcing out of a tutor all that he knew about the ancient civilisations and the philosophy of Greece and Rome'.[36] Given that I have found no records of classes in this early period on ancient philosophy, this may well have been a class on philosophy, which might not advertise itself as 'classical' but would almost inevitably introduce its students to antiquity. For some students, this might not be an introduction but a consolidation of prior acquaintance, but no students are likely to have had any prolonged exposure to the classical world.

The *Annual Reports* from the Welsh Districts offer a series of insights into how antiquity might be studied under different titles, where the actual names of classes would not show any classics. In 1914 a logic class at Ynysybwl (a 'little industrial village') was studying Plato's *Republic* (7),[37] suggesting both a broad sense of 'logic' and a recognition of Plato's potential importance in a range of contexts. In 1914–15, there were twenty-five tutorial classes, but also a preparatory class (lasting one year and leading up to membership of a tutorial class), attended by fifty-nine students, where the subject of study was sociology and Greek civilization (8). Most of the classes in these years were devoted to economic, historical and social studies, and politics, but there was recurrent interest in classical antiquity. Thus, in 1921–2 a pioneer class on history and politics at Pontadarwe included the study of Ancient Athens (7). In 1923–4, when there were ninety-seven university tutorial classes in the Welsh district, of which none was explicitly focused on antiquity, two political philosophy classes taught Plato and Aristotle in the first half of the year and Rousseau to Cole and Tawney in the second (10). Although we do not have details of all the philosophy classes, we can be fairly sure that many would have included study of Plato and Aristotle.

If we pursue the Welsh experience, we uncover ever more substantial study of Plato and related classical topics. In 1925–6 a philosophy class at Merthyr studied idealism for its first year, in Plato, Berkeley, Kant and Hegel (28); one at Ferndale in 1926–7 studied the *Republic* (28); and one in 1927–8 at Cwmllynfell (near Neath), made up largely of colliery workers, studied the Book of Job, Plato's *Republic* and the *Method* of Descartes (23). In 1924–5, twenty-four students enrolled in a tutorial class in social philosophy at Fforestfach, where Plato was studied under the rubric of 'utopian ideals' (21). In 1925–6 a class at Caersws discussed 'such topics as: The Village Community, The Greek City State, Rome and its Political Organization, The Feudal System, The French Revolution, The Nation and Nationality. Several evenings were given to a consideration of Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*' (17). In 1928–9 a preparatory class in philosophy at Hirwain had twelve lectures on early Greek philosophy and twelve on Plato's *Republic* (22). The first year of a tutorial class in philosophy at Penclawdd read the *Apology*, *Crito* and *Republic*, with the last being studied by means of passages read and discussed in class (32). At Cwmllynfell the philosophy class reached its final, third year, in which seventeen students studied Aristotle's *Ethics* and Kant's *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, and wrote on 'Aristotle's Conception of Virtue', 'Kant's Theory of the Moral Act' and, lastly, 'A Comparison between Aristotle and Kant as Ethical Teachers'. The report by the class secretary sums up:

> The tutor was afraid that the students would find these books too difficult and that the attendance would fall away. But his fears in that respect were groundless. They are now acquainted – and that textually – with the main ethical arguments of both thinkers, and have discussed them in very great detail. They have always learnt to apply these to their own life, and have always criticised them from this point of view. 'I hardly think any other class in Wales worked on dryer or stiffer texts, but the interest of the class never waned, and sometimes the discussion reached a high philosophical standard' (35).

Meanwhile, an advanced class at Abergavenny continued into a fifth year of philosophy, and completed reading the whole text of Plato's *Republic* (28). 'The whole of the time last session was given to special studies in the application of the principles of Plato's *Republic* to the problems of the modern state' (28). In Newport, the 'dockers' class' pursued a study of social science, in which

> a detailed study of Plato's *Republic* was taken last session, and a sound mastery of the text was acquired by the students. The application of Plato's principles to contemporary problems was the chief theme of the discussion.

> The students came to the conclusion that the supreme task of democracy was to devise social machinery as [*sic*] would discover the 'wise man' and make him wiser. The interest taken by a class of working men in questions such as the place of art in education and in social life was very gratifying, and the discussion on the development of knowledge from conjecture through science to philosophy was most animated. A good deal of reading was done by individuals and the 'written work' was quite satisfactory (27).

Even allowing for the tutors' investment in the students' performance, which is seconded by the investment of the reporting secretaries, these references indicate a persistent and thorough exposure to versions of classical antiquity, via classes whose titles do not necessarily advertise their identity as classical at all.

Perhaps even more striking than the philosophy and social science classes are the literature classes. Again, if the sources enable us to read the details, we can see that general literary titles of classes sometimes conceal substantial classical content. In 1923 the WEA Playgoers' Club at Birmingham had a spring programme which included readings of Greek plays alongside 'a performance of A. A. Milne's "The Romantic Age"'.[38] In 1926 a London WEA class, which began by studying dramatic literature, ended by performing Sophocles' *Antigone* at the Old Vic.[39] In 1926–7 a Welsh class in 'Philosophical Tendencies in Literature' read, among other much more modern works, Gilbert Murray's renderings of the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles and the *Medea* and *Trojan Women* of Euripides.[40] This class was taught in two locations, in Ebbw Vale and Tredgar, and addressed a total of fifty-three people. At Neath the class in 'English Literature' read Murray's translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* as well as Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, *Twelfth Night*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *A Doll's House*, *The Wild Duck*, *Lady from the Sea* and *Pygmalion* (32). The class in 'Welsh Literature' in Pontardawe in 1928–9 studied 'literary criticism in different epochs from Plato down to the nineteenth century' to give 'a wider horizon to the contemplation of "Welsh Literature"' (34). If even the Welsh literature class could include some classical content, then it might be possible to conclude that classical antiquity had quite a substantial presence within the practices of the WEA.

Literature classes formed about 10 per cent of all the WEA's offerings during its history;[41] philosophy classes seem to have accounted for 5 per cent.[42] If we can extrapolate from the South Wales district – which gives a much greater level of detail on the content of classes than most other districts – we may conclude that a small but significant proportion of workers in these decades were reading at least Plato, and maybe Aristotle. It is also likely that there were other kinds of

exposure to classical antiquity, particularly via Murray's translations of tragedy. In this period, children in schools, even at the secondary level, were not studying the classics in translation to any great extent, so ordinary working people rarely had any general access to the culture of antiquity – which, of course, was one of the deficiencies that Murray's translations tried to address.

A particularly interesting example of the ancient world being purveyed indirectly can be read in the 1918 book edited by the campaigning journalist Harold Begbie, *Living Water: Being the Romance of the Poor Student*. This is a collection of autobiographical fragments from various 'poor students', describing their backgrounds and educational trajectories. When one of these, the 'Manchester Socialist', rounds on his interviewer with the words 'the only man that has ever helped me is Socrates', the interviewer admits that 'I was amazed.' The Manchester Socialist continues:

> When I read the Symposium for the first time . . . I knew that I had got into a new world. And when I read the Trial and Death, I knew that I had got a hero for life. I want no greater hero than Socrates. I know of no idealism that is higher and nobler than his.[43]

The Socialist began to attend university extension lectures, and from there joined the WEA and became a member of the very first university tutorial class in Rochdale. The tutor of this class was R. H. Tawney, who was teaching economics at Glasgow University at the time (Figure 13.1). The class at Rochdale studied

Figure 13.1 Pioneer Tutorial Class, Rochdale (1907), from Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education.

economic history with an emphasis on the eighteenth century.[44] But the Manchester Socialist describes the class very differently:

> Then came the luck of my life … I met Mr R. H. Tawney, the tutor, and through him I was introduced to the world of Greek civilisation. Mr Tawney struck me from the first as a true and absolutely disinterested friend of the working-classes. I could give him not only my respect and my confidence, but my affection. I was a member of the first tutorial class ever formed by the WEA under Oxford University. It was the new-birth of my intellectual life. Oxford came to me with the wisdom of Greece in her hands, and from that moment I read Greek civilisation to the exclusion of almost everything else. To this day I can't get enough books about Greece. I'm making a special study just at present of the Periclean age. Any book that deals with Pericles is more than gold to me. And I'm sure of this, that there's no understanding of our own economic conditions without knowledge of Greek history.[45]

Without this particular testimony we would not have been aware that Tawney's class in economics also offered to the workers knowledge of the ancient world, and we would have derived an incomplete notion of the role of classics within the work of the WEA.

The rhetoric of classics at the WEA

Clearly there is much else to be said along the lines already laid out, but I want now to shift focus. With the passionate declaration of the 'Manchester Socialist', we move from sketching the extent of classics at the WEA to exploring its rhetorical force. The 'Manchester Socialist' experienced what Rose calls an epiphany,[46] corresponding to what Rowbotham found in her study of university extension audiences: 'an excitement and a sense of liberation almost like religious conversion'.[47] The rhetorical force of the classical reference derives partly from the cultural distance between the classics as signifier of exclusion and the working-class subject who lays claim to the classics. It should be noted, however, that the working-class student does not usually characterize the classical material as hostile or impenetrable; rather, the material offers an almost romantic familiarity and availability. The rhetorical force also derives from a pre-existing liberal discourse about the classics, which the WEA can be seen to tap into, and develop, partly under the guidance of classicists like Murray and Zimmern. Turner labels this version of antiquity 'evolutionary humanistic

Hellenism', and suggests that antiquity as a spiritual, even a quasi-religious, object of veneration took the place of a lost faith for many late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century intellectuals.[48]

As a version of religion, the classics sometimes appears in the writings of Albert Mansbridge like the Christian gospel itself, demotically available within everyday life while simultaneously challenging its quotidian assumptions. Thus Mansbridge writes: 'There are miners and factory hands in the North who don't care twopence about increasing their wages or living in bigger houses or wearing finer clothes, but who can discuss Greek history with men like Alfred Zimmern, Greek poetry with men like Gilbert Murray and Greek philosophy with men like W. H. Hadow.'[49] The classics in this formulation act, I suggest, as a metaphor for the workers' aptitude for education, but also as a metonymy for their spirituality, which helps to establish their right to education. This quotation also uses the Ancient Greeks to bridge the gap between the working men and the university tutors, and, crucially, to denote them all as 'men' – men, that is, in the sense of both heroic men, like the Ancient Greeks, and ordinary men, who are linked by their ordinary humanity. Although the classics does not appear very frequently in Mansbridge's writing, when it does, it is with an idealism that is forceful enough to join the classes rather than separating them.

It will be noted that, in this quotation, the classics is explicitly opposed to any desire for material gain. This aspect of Mansbridge's educational ideology sometimes brought him into conflict with other sectors of the working-class movement, and with other members of the WEA.[50] It can be aligned with the equivocation over identifying the WEA fully with the labour movement, and it is part of what gives rise to the idea that Mansbridge's WEA became co-opted rather than producing radical change. But Mansbridge was not alone in wielding this rhetoric of enthusiasm. Many other early testimonies strike a note similar to his claim that 'Adult education is a secular gospel.'[51] Alfred Cobham was a working man who found in university extension, and later in the WEA, the education and, indeed, the 'joy of life that was denied to me in the years of my youth'.[52] He writes to promote adult education as one of the means to national recovery after the Great War, envisaging a recovery that would be not solely technical and economic but also cultural and even spiritual. Cobham's first lectures were in the classics:

> It was my good fortune to begin my University Extension career with a course of lectures on Greek History from Solon to Pericles. What a joy it brought into my life to watch Athens rise to the zenith of Greek civilisation.

> Hundreds of hours have I gloated over the victories of Marathon and Salamis. And those Olympic festivals – the thrilling excitement of the chariot race, and the pageantry of the pan-athenaic procession in which Miltiades, thrice-victor, was carried to the Acropolis to be crowned with a garland of bay-leaves. Talk about national sentiment! I have been the winner of that chariot race many a time when I have tackled a task apparently beyond me. Then, as if to add joy to joy, that most delightful expounder of Greek life, Mr Kaines Smith, delivered two courses of lectures, one on Greek Religion and Architecture, and one on Greek Art and National Life. Thrills? Who can ever forget the gesture and the eloquence with which he described the Discobolus? Of course one never does forget.[53]

The epiphanic quality here is akin to that recorded by the Manchester Socialist, in that the classics is a revelation, but also appears as offering a sense of rightful access and even ownership. This sense of ownership is facilitated by the representation of the classics as delivering pleasures of a particularly immediate kind, a thrill of identification with exciting activity.

These rhapsodic testimonies are from workers who became students, and who included classical material in the subjects of their study. The rhetoric of other sources on the classics, for instance of *Highway* editorials, is noticeably different. Here the version of the classics that we may read, in the admittedly sparse references, is not so personal, but is connected to the nation. The editorials are not rhapsodic, partly because they are not couched in the first person, but when they do, very occasionally, touch on classics, they lay a definite claim to the classics as part of a general culture from which working people shall be no more excluded. *The Highway* begins with a reference to Plato in its very first issue, when the new enterprise is introduced by a long paragraph that ends:

> When the philosopher Plato was speculating on the future of society, he said, in his half humorous half pathetic way, that the world would never go straight till the kings became philosophers or the philosophers kings. The modern world is faced with the nobler task of making the people both king and philosopher; for unless democracy puts on in some measure the philosopher it cannot hope to win or to retain its kingdom.

The Platonic views on education are, of course, a two-edged sword for anyone to use, especially, perhaps, working-class students, because such views often seem as keen to exclude people as to empower them. And, indeed, Plato is the object of much debate within the pages of *The Highway*, never simply accepted

as an authority. But if we think for a moment of the exclusionary version of Plato, the one that would distrust the worker-students of the WEA, we can, perhaps, read a related doubt in this paragraph. It was a commonplace in the nineteenth century, when the franchise was expanded, that 'we must educate our masters' – or rather, in the words of Robert Lowe in his parliamentary speech on the Reform Act of 1867, 'it will be absolutely necessary that you should prevail on our future masters to learn their letters'.[54] This phrase clearly assumes and, indeed, perpetuates a class difference between the speaker and his audience on the one hand, and the 'masters' on the other, who will only be bearable in the improved, educated model. Does the paragraph in *The Highway* register a version of this anxiety about the uneducated populace? I would argue that its rhetoric is quite different; the democratic 'people' inserted into the Platonic taxonomy of philosophers and kings are represented as eminently entitled to their kingdom. Moreover, the modern task of education is 'nobler' than the ancient, not least because it goes way beyond 'learning their letters'. Part of the workers' educational birthright, indeed, is Plato's educational theories.

A few years later, *The Highway* comments vigorously on the debate over compulsory Greek at Oxford University. This issue matters because it binds the national identity to a version of classics which now fosters the welfare neither of the discipline nor of the nation:

> The 'Greek Question' is much in evidence at present at the universities and in the newspapers. The Association, too, has its Greek question, about which it intends to make its voice heard in the near future. With the so-called compulsory 'Greek' it has no concern, except to desire its abolition; for it knows, as all good teachers know, that where there is compulsion, there is likely to be no true education. What it is concerned with is the far more vital question of the open door of Greek – the extension to workpeople and to the children of workpeople of opportunities of becoming familiar with the literature and art and history of the first civilised communities in Europe. Many generations of the well-to-do have learnt to hate Greek by being forced to study it, and being taught it badly. The time is coming when the poor will learn to love it by being allowed to study it, and finding in it some of their own truest aspirations and ideals.[55]

The Highway had not changed its tune in 1917, when R. W. Livingstone published *A Defence of Classical Education*. The *Highway* considered it a matter for the attention of a working-class organization:

> Mr Livingstone calls his book *A Defence of Classical Education*. So far as the WEA is concerned it is not defence that is needed, but offence. Most of us know enough about the Greeks to want to know a great deal more, both for ourselves and our children … Plato is used as a text book in some tutorial classes; and if few WEA members can read him in the original, many understand some of the problems he handles better perhaps than the general run of those who can.[56]

Although some of this rhetoric strikes a very traditional note in the type of value that it attributes to classical antiquity, a significant difference is made by the audience to whom the critique is addressed. This audience clearly includes students of working-class origins, even though it may also include tutors with more middle-class affiliation. There is a persistent assumption about the relevance of Greek to those who have been unable to study it, and, conversely, the relevance of those people to the study of Greek.

Why were the classicists at the WEA?

I noted earlier that classicists formed a good proportion of the university tutors who supported the WEA from the outset. These were, predictably, the same classicists as were engaged in developing the 'evolutionary humanistic Hellenism' mentioned earlier. Murray, Zimmern, Livingstone and Lindsay wrote regularly for *The Highway*, and Zimmern was also active in other roles,[57] while Murray and Zimmern are also known for their involvement in other movements of progressive reform, such as the League of Nations. The Hellenism of this group is not, of course, without its own history of production; it did not spring fully formed from the classicists' heads, but responded to pressures in the general social and cultural context. As we noted, the decline of organized religion left a space, which such a Hellenism was able to fill, and Hellenism was well prepared to fill it by its own history of cultural authority. But this was not the only driving factor. Turner (1981) and Stray (1998) also point to the fact that the university reforms of the nineteenth century had left classicists needing to justify their discipline in new terms. One way for classicists to proceed was to repackage the timeless value of antiquity to match Edwardian consciousness of social and political shifts; change is inevitable, but becomes progress when guided by the Hellenic spirit.[58] For classicists who already had liberal sympathies in politics, the WEA offered fertile ground for exactly that justification; classical antiquity

could be celebrated as offering a model of culture that was demanding but also inclusive – that offered only the best, but offered to share it.

Early volumes of *The Highway*, in 1909 and 1910, published parts of Gilbert Murray's inaugural, a series of articles by A. D. Lindsay on his translation of Plato's *Republic*, and a series of articles by Zimmern, based on the Oxford lectures which would subsequently appear as his book *The Greek Commonwealth*. *The Highway* also advertised Murray's article 'Working-Men and Greek', published in the weekly paper founded by Keir Hardie, *The Labour Leader*.[59] In this article, Murray demonstrated that Greek literature is a natural pursuit for the working man because the Greeks themselves combined high culture with material poverty. Moreover, Greek is inherently progressive: Greek provides an education in 'the first splendid beginnings of almost everything that matters in the forward march of mankind'. Because of this disposition towards the progressive, the problems which Greeks were tackling were 'essentially the same problems that trouble advanced thinkers at the present day, and their spirit is or ought to be, in the main, our spirit'. The only drawback to an immediate alliance between the working man and Greek was the difficulty of the language, about which Murray was disarmingly frank; and, although he offered the services of the WEA to all workers who wished to learn Greek, he had to end his article with the hope that 'anyone who embarks on this sort of reading will remember my warning, that it is all the work of a far-off time and, even apart from the languages, needs an interpreter to make it clear'.

In this approach, Murray's writing implicitly acknowledged a possible misfit between 'the working man' and 'Greek', such that this particular circle could not be easily squared. Zimmern's contributions suggest the opposite. Zimmern also desired to promote the liberal version of Ancient Greece and share it with a newly active working class, but countenanced no difficulty; for instance, 'there is nothing a modern man needs to learn before he can read Plato or the Gospels, except the mere art of reading'.[60] This simplicity of solution came about because the WEA already *was* Greek, or at least Athenian. In 1909 Zimmern reported on 'Summer Meeting Impressions' and claimed that for the members of the WEA summer schools, 'as for the Athenians, politics are the gate to all the arts and all the sciences'.[61] The WEA members and the Greeks were further linked, in a deft sleight of hand, as being socialists. Socialism included 'every subject that ever had been and could be included under literae humaniores', from metaphysics to economics, and such subjects 'as the Athenians discovered (and Socrates after all was a working man) are best discussed in conversation'. The WEA members' discovery of the topics of a liberal education, pursued by discussion, thus aligned them with the Greeks as progressives.

In 1910 Zimmern was even more explicit about such identification. In 'Tents are Better' he noted the public activity of WEA members, likening it to the intellectual and political ferment of the Athenian *polis*, and suggested that 'the WEA numbers members who, under grimmer conditions, are living like Greeks'.[62] The series of articles on 'The Greeks and Modern Life' began with the WEA's claim on Greek. This was contrasted with Greek as it currently appeared in formal education:

> The 'compulsory Greek' in our schools and universities, which provides so much copy for the journalists, may have all the virtues claimed for it; it may be as unpleasant and as health-giving as the best pill ever invented; but there is very little about it that is Greek. There are more true Greeks in the WEA than in all the classical universities and schools of England put together.[63]

At the end of the series of articles, the WEA appeared again as the inheritor of Greece and, consequently, as the means to remake England, specifically by its democratic and egalitarian disposition. Zimmern suggested that the Athenians, faced with England's particular problems, would have worked to bridge the gap between public and private, which is exactly what the WEA endeavoured to do with its ideology of 'fellowship'; 'the best thing about a WEA gathering, and the most truly Greek thing about it, is that men and women feel "at home" there'. This work, at the interface of public and private, was the work of making England 'for the first time in her history a truly civilised country'.[64] Liberal and progressive Hellenism here joined up seamlessly with working-class aspirations in order to produce a new version of England.

Within the discourses of the WEA, the Ancient Greeks did offer to cross, and even transcend, the class barriers of the early twentieth century. To this extent, the discipline of classics could be put to work in the cause of reform. But there are two obvious caveats. The first is that, despite the resonance of individual passages, there is not a great deal of sustained reference to classical antiquity in the early years of the WEA or of *The Highway*; I am picking out my quotations from among vast tracts of economic and political discourse that are not at all interested in the ancient world. Yet often, when there is reference to antiquity, it bears a considerable ideological weight, deriving from the point of cultural change where a real historical restriction to the elite meets a new emphasis on the inclusivity and openness of 'evolutionary humanist Hellenism'. Although this Hellenism was potentially radical in its acknowledgement of a national culture that should be shared, the second caveat is that it is important not to romanticize it in our turn. Workers who desired a higher education met dons who needed

more compelling narratives about the relevance of their subject to the modern world; the embrace of working-class education by humanist Hellenism can be explained by the dons' pragmatism as well as their liberal, reforming ideologies. Classics at the WEA was thus multiply determined and multiply significant; ancient Greeks might be available to all, but there might be a variety of motives for calling upon them.

14

Christopher Caudwell's Greek and Latin Classics

Edith Hall

There's a valley in Spain called Jarama
it's a place that we all know so well
it was there that we fought against the fascists
we saw a peaceful valley turn to hell.

From this valley they say we are going
but don't hasten to bid us adieu
even though we lost the battle at Jarama
we'll set this valley free 'fore we're through.

So ran Woody Guthrie's adaptation of a popular anti-fascist song commemorating the battle of Jarama in the Spanish Civil War, 12 February 1937. In the last line, with the words 'we'll set this valley free', Guthrie turns the individual bloody encounter into the universal struggle for freedom and equality, the cause which the soldiers of the International Brigades certainly believed they were defending.

On 'Suicide Hill', east of Madrid, the British Battalion of the International Brigade lost nearly two-thirds of their 600-strong force.[1] They included a communist writer, steeped in Greek and Roman classics, Christopher Caudwell (1907–37; Figure 14.1). He was twenty-nine years old and the author of numerous works, including two book-length studies of literature, which would be published soon after his death, *Illusion and Reality* (1937) and *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938). To the comrades alongside whom he fought he was known by his real name, Christopher Sprigg, and for the rest of this chapter, to avoid confusion, I simply call him 'Christopher'. His brief life, fervent commitment to the cause of international socialism, prolific output and untimely death do not just make an arresting story in themselves; they can also be read as emblematic of the whole

Figure 14.1 Christopher stands on the far right with other members of CPGB. The picture was taken shortly before he left London for Spain.

lost cause of British revolutionary socialism in the 1930s. This briefly promised an exciting new approach to cultural analysis, as Philip Bounds has shown in his fine study *British Communism and the Politics of Literature 1928–1939* (2012). It also opened up new vistas on the literature of Ancient Greece and Rome, most of which were prematurely closed off again.

Although it is seldom pointed out, the spirit that drove British communism in the 1930s and inspired people like Christopher in their literary work and military action was far from ineffectual. It was in the left-wing resistance to fascism and the spirit fostered in the universities during the period from the General Strike (1926) to the Second World War – and not the war alone – that prepared the nation and the generation of Labour politicians for the implementation in the 1940s of some of the most important social reforms Britain has ever seen. Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan, for example, the son of a coal-miner who established – against enormous vested interest – the National Health Service, which would provide free medical care at point of need *for all*, a seismic breakthrough in the struggle for social reform, was suspended from the Labour Party in 1939 for straying from the party line by rallying with members of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and other socialist parties in the attempted formation

of a united, cross-party 'Popular Front' against fascism. The ideology that stimulated and nourished the work of figures from the left such as Christopher throughout the 1930s had real-world political implications manifesting themselves in the foundation of the 'Welfare State' – a mighty landmark for British social reform – and further reforms brought in by the Wilson cabinets of the 1960s, which included former CPGB members.[2]

Among Christopher's poems is a well-crafted and faithful translation of a Greek epigram by Crinagoras of Mytilene (first century BC). It is a memorial poem for a young man from Lesbos who died far from his homeland in Roman Iberia. As Sullivan has suggested, it might well serve as Christopher's own obituary (*Palatine Anthology* 7.376):[3]

> Unhappy men, who roam, on hope deferred
> Relying, thinking not of painful death!
> Here was Seleucos, great in mind and word,
> Who his young prime enjoyed for but a breath.
> In world-edge Spain, so far from Lesbian lands
> He lies, a stranger on uncharted strands.

Seleucos clearly haunted Christopher, but Christopher has himself turned into a ghostly presence haunting the imagination of the British left and its literary circles ever since *his* premature death in Spain. His own voice has yet to be fully heard, since so many of his papers lie unpublished in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin. Despite the lip service routinely paid to the radicals who risked their lives for the freedom of Spain, it has long been customary to criticize Christopher's published work. A retrospective condescension has been a common response to his unswerving commitment to the Soviet Union,[4] as if this had been an unusual stance on the British left in the mid-1930s. He was a remarkable polymath, an expert on the history of aviation who tried to think about the world of knowledge – physics as well as literature – synthetically; using an ancient philosopher's image, he explained science and art as yearning to be reunited,'like the two halves produced by cutting the original human hermaphrodite in half, according to the story of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*.'[5] Yet he has met with damning critiques of his grasp of the physical sciences. His cultural and literary theories have been savagely criticized as naïve, misguided or reductionist by theoretical titans on the Marxist scene, including E. P. Thompson and especially Terry Eagleton in *Criticism and Ideology* (1976), thus perpetuating the tiresome tradition of oedipal aggression towards forefathers displayed by new generations within

the intellectual left.[6] Little has been written about Christopher that does not evaluate – and often condemn – his contribution to materialist theories of culture, especially literary culture.

Bounds has recently argued, persuasively, that Christopher took many of his theoretical bearings from important elements in Soviet theory, 'but that he refracted the Soviet orthodoxy through the distorting mechanisms of his distinctively autodidactic mind'.[7] Like Bounds, I hope to shift the emphasis onto illumination rather than judgement. First, I aim to show the extent to which Christopher's approach to aesthetic questions was indebted to classical literature, especially classical literary theory. This debt can help to explain what have been seen as some of his more idiosyncratic as well as important insights into the relationship between Life and Art, and between reality and poetic rhythm, on which his thinking was groundbreaking. Second, I want to emphasize that Christopher saw the production of art, and analysis of art, as necessary parts of the struggle for social and political renewal. He wrote poetry himself, and saw no real distinction between theory and practice. Both art and its analysis were, for him, active verbs rather than abstract nouns. Art offers humans a way to think about their predicament collectively, a way of seeing their fate without which they could not cope with it, let alone change it: tragic art can be great art, for example, 'for here reality at its bitterest – death, despair, eternal failure – is yet given an organisation, a shape, an affective arrangement which expresses a deeper and more social view of fate'.[8] Tragedy *organizes, shapes, arranges affectively* and *expresses*, thus producing a *social view* of fate. If the social world were to be changed for the better, mankind needed – Christopher believed – to achieve a collective and clear-eyed 'social view' of mankind's situation. It was the function of art and its discussants to make such a view achievable.

In his finest poem, 'Classic Encounter', he fuses material from an ancient tragedy with a critical stance on more recent history, attempting to create through art 'a deeper and more social view' of the cost of militarism, ancient and modern:

> Arrived upon the downs of asphodel
> I walked towards the military quarter
> To find the sunburnt ghosts of allied soldiers
> Killed on the Chersonese.
>
> I met a band of palefaced weary men
> Got up in odd equipment. 'Hi,' I said
> 'Are you Gallipoli?'

And one, the leader, with a voice of gold,
Answered: 'No. Ours, Sir, was an older bungle.
We are Athenian hoplites who sat down
Before young Syracuse.

'Need I recount our too-much-memoired end?
The hesitancy of our General Staff,
The battle in the Harbour, where Hope fled
But we could not?

'Not our disgrace in that,' the leader added,
'But we are those proficient in the arts
Freed in return for the repeated verses
Of our Euripides.

'Those honeyed words did not soothe Cerberus'
(The leader grinned), 'For sulky Charon hire
Deficient, and by Rhadamanthos ruled
No mitigation.

'And yet with men, born victims of their ears
The chorus of the weeping *Troades*
Prevailed to gain the freedom of our limbs
And waft us back to Athens.

'Through every corridor of this old barracks
We wander without friends, not fallen or
Survivors in a military sense.
Hence our disgrace.'

He turned, and as the rank mists took them in
They chanted at the God to Whom men pray,
Whether He be Compulsion, or All-fathering,
Or Fate and blind.[9]

The 'I' in this poem is a visitor to the Underworld, like Odysseus in book eleven of the *Odyssey*. The *nekuia* was, of course, a favourite trope of all the modernists, especially in the wake of the First World War,[10] but few of them made such explicit references to real events in recent history. The 'I' voice meets the Athenians who had died a horrible death in Syracuse in 413 BCE (described in tragic detail in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, book VII) as a result of the military debacle that concluded Athens' disastrous invasion of Sicily.

The speaker mistakes them for those fallen in the Gallipoli campaign of 1915–16, when combined British and Anzac fatalities alone are estimated at 76,000. The poem thus draws a parallel between the victims of warmongering generals in the Mediterranean at a distance of more than two millennia. But it also incorporates an ancient tradition, reported in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias* 29,[11] that some of the Athenians had persuaded their captors to spare their lives by performing songs from the tragedies of Euripides:

> Most of the Athenians perished in the quarries by diseases and ill diet … Several were saved for the sake of Euripides, whose poetry, it appears, was in request among the Sicilians more than among any of the settlers out of Greece. And when any travelers arrived that could tell them some passage, or give them any specimen of his verses, they were delighted to be able to communicate them to one another. Many of the captives who got safe back to Athens are said, after they reached home, to have gone and made their acknowledgments to Euripides, relating how that some of them had been released from their slavery by teaching what they could remember of his poems, and others, when straggling after the fight, been relieved with meat and drink for repeating some of his lyrics.

But Christopher adapts this ancient anecdote by suggesting that the song they had sung was actually from *Trojan Women*. With the exceptions of *Medea* and *Oedipus*, this was the most familiar Greek tragedy in Britain in the 1920s. Just after the war, in 1919, Sybil Thorndike played Hecuba at the Old Vic to raise funds for the newly founded League of Nations, and also at the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square: she said later, 'All the misery and awfulness of the 1914 war was symbolised in that play and we all felt here was the beginning of a new era of peace and brotherhood.'[12] We do not know whether Christopher saw that production or not. But the work that he makes the ancient play do shows him forging a distinctive new mythical method that used the Greeks in a progressive political way. The method allows him both to expose the needless deaths of irresponsibly led ordinary soldiers, and also to pose metaphysical questions about the reasons men invent to understand mortality. The last lines are a response to one of the most famous challenges to the idea of benevolent deities, expressed in *Trojan Women* by Hecuba herself (e.g. 884–6).

Before we explore Christopher's writings further, we will benefit from laying out the context within which he was operating, especially the political organization to which he had given his allegiance, the CPGB. This had been founded in 1920. Inspired by the Russian Revolution, and supported by a financial donation from

Lenin, the four major political groups which combined to form the new CPGB were the British Socialist Party (BSP), the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), the Prohibition and Reform Party (PRP) and the Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF).[13]

Although the CPGB never became a mass party like its equivalents in France or Italy, it exerted an influence out of proportion to its size, partly because there were always links between its members and those of the mainstream Labour Party. Substantial numbers of prominent workers' representatives, students and intellectuals, moreover, did actually take out membership. By the time of the General Strike in 1926, the party had over 10,000 members. Its first member of parliament, William Gallacher, was elected for the mining district of West Fife in Scotland in the 1931 general election, at which the party won nearly 75,000 votes nationally. During the next few years Christopher joined the party, along with thousands of other young idealists. It offered the young people of that generation 'a bridge between the radical liberal tradition of the "freeborn Englishman" and the twentieth-century struggle against fascism and decrepit capitalism.'[14] Christopher was one of several communist writers during the first two decades of the party's existence; they were influential among their 'fellow-traveller' friends – the substantial number of communist sympathizers who never actually became members, such as W. H. Auden, E. M. Forster and the classical scholar and poet Louis MacNeice.

By 1936, as the first rumours of Joseph Stalin's purges emerged, the CPGB leaders had begun to be divided over the question of continuing support for the Soviet Union. But the emergency in Spain diverted the world's attention and aroused the grass-roots members of the party to action. British communists were crucial in the creation of the International Brigades which went to fight for the republicans in the Civil War. After Christopher's death, while the fascists gained power in both Germany and Italy, the membership of the CPGB steadily increased. At the end of the war, two communists were elected to parliament in the general election. This was the historic moment at which the CPGB enjoyed its greatest popularity; but, within a decade, lurid anti-Soviet propaganda, alongside truthful accounts of Stalin's dreadful crimes, sent the party into terminal decline.

Looking back on the 1930s, the Marxist historian Christopher Hill himself drew attention to the number of CPGB intellectuals for whom, he argued, it had not been history but English literature that had been the original primary interest – he was thinking of A. L. Morton, Edgell Rickword, Alick West, Douglas Garman and Jack Lindsay.[15] I do not deny the importance of English literature in the intellectual development and publications of these people, and for other

communists of their generation, such as the poet (and translator of Virgil) Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and the English literature specialist Margot Heinemann. But several, for example Alick West and Jack Lindsay, only came to English literature via traditional and rigorous educations in the Greek and Latin classics. Moreover, part of their Marxist understanding of culture was that separating different linguistic traditions and historical periods – reading ancient poetry in isolation from contemporary poetry, for example – was to impoverish the transformative social potential of art. Edgell Rickword, who in 1919 went to Pembroke College, Oxford, to read modern languages, had attended Colchester Royal Grammar School, famous for its training in classical languages and literature. Douglas Garman attended Caius College, Cambridge, graduating in medieval and modern languages in 1923, but much of his specialist translation work in later life was actually on Ancient Greek history.

There were, moreover, classical scholars working inside academia who were committed and active party members, notably Benjamin Farrington, Francis William Walbank and George Derwent Thomson. In their cases, too, we often find a sensitivity to the continuity of literary history, taking the form of much more developed interest in the 'reception' of ancient literature in the modern world than in most of the classical scholars of the time. It is, therefore, possible to make a case, as I have with Henry Stead in another volume,[16] that British Marxist intellectual tradition, as founded in the 1930s by committed revolutionaries, was built less on literature in English than on literature in Latin and Greek. This has important implications for the way that literature in that period is configured, since the classicism of this time is routinely associated with the modernist poetry of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and the other practitioners of the 'radical right' in literature.[17] Their fame and public prominence has effectively occluded the role of classics in early British communism.

Among the substantial group of CPGB intellectuals, there were many who did not operate within the 'Ivory Tower' but in the public world of letters. Classical authors were still an important component of the advanced school curriculum, and so many of the middle-class intellectuals attracted to communism had read substantial amounts of ancient literature. One of the most brilliant of the young communists killed in Spain, John Cornford, was the son of the distinguished and prolific Cambridge classicist Francis MacDonald Cornford, himself a politically engaged supporter of the working-class movement.[18] John had undoubtedly studied classical authors during his privileged education at Stowe School. But the most promising communist intellectual killed in Spain was Christopher, whose posthumous book *Illusion and Reality* (1937), despite all the obloquy it has been

customary to pour on it since Terry Eagleton's critique, has undoubtedly exerted a considerable influence in British and also Continental left-wing circles.[19] It was mostly written in the summer of 1935.

Before the painstaking studies of Sullivan and Whetter, the standard view of Christopher had long been that he was at worst a 'maverick' author,[20] and at best an autodidact who taught himself all he knew about the history and philosophy of the world in the London Library in the 1930s. Yet education scarcely begins at university. He was a member of the highly educated Roman Catholic middle class. His family had literary interests and had worked in journalism for several generations. He was unusually close to his father, Stanhope W. Sprigg, because his mother died when he was only eight years old. Stanhope was superlatively well read. He had attended the King's Grammar School in Worcester before beginning a career (as had at least two generations of Spriggs before him) in journalism, editing, literary consultancy and translation. Stanhope was a member of the Authors' Club in Whitehall Court and the Savage Club on Adelphi Terrace. He regularly renewed his reader's card for the British Museum reading room.[21]

Stanhope's first publication was *Games and Amusements* in the 'Sunlight Year Books' series published at Port Sunlight by the Lever Brothers (1895). He was best known as the editor of a popular illustrated children's series *Louis Wain's Annual* (1901–21) and of *The Windsor Magazine*. But he was decidedly on the left-wing end of the political spectrum, as his strongly worded letter urging the formation of a National Union of Working Journalists in *The Journalist* reveals: he talks of the 'colossal stupidity' of working journalists who expected that their employers would ever raise their salaries without a fight, and urges that the proposed union should accept only 'bona fide pressmen', whether 'rich or poor, high or low', and exclude all newspaper proprietors.[22] For many years Stanhope Sprigg also offered his services, probably for no fee, as literary advisor to the Society of Women Journalists.[23] His commitment to progressive politics is underlined by his publication of Lucy B. Stearns' *Two Schemes to Prevent Pauperism* (London, 1911); his keen interest in military matters and international politics, at least during the First World War, is proved by his translation of *The New Bernhardi: 'World Power or Downfall'* (London: C. A. Pearson, 1915); his study of the Australian Labour politician and prime minister William Hughes in *W. M. Hughes, the Strong Man of Australia: With a message from Mr. Hughes* (London: Pearson, 1916); and his First World War pamphlet *The British Blockade: What it Means; How it Works* (London: G. B. Dibblee, 1917).

But Stanhope's regular paying job was as literary editor of the *Daily Express* newspaper, owned by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd. He lost this position in 1922 after

the death of Pearson, who was fond of him and had always protected his interests. Stanhope was forced to accept the post of literary editor on the *Yorkshire Observer* and moved north. Christopher, although required for financial reasons to leave school prematurely, was keen to help his father, and found a job in Bradford as a trainee reporter on the same paper. The books his father chose to discuss, and which one of Christopher's biographers suspects he helped his father review, included works by Maxim Gorky, several on new technologies including the wireless, and *Dictionary of Socialism*.[24] Brought up by a union-organizing father, and plunged into poverty suddenly in his teens, he was soon politically disaffected, although he remained unaffiliated to any party or ideology, and attached to the idea of the British Empire.

By 1925 he had moved back to London, to join his older brother Theo as a freelance journalist and contributor to the new magazine *Airways*: aviation had long been a family interest. Christopher also worked as assistant editor on the journal of the Association for British Malaya. He began writing in several different genres under a variety of pen names: his works on aviation were written as St. John Lewis, Christopher Sprigg, Arthur Cave and (intriguingly) Icarus: the telegram address he shared with his brother was 'Ikaros, Estrand, London'.[25] He published several books on flying, but by the early 1930s was bored and frustrated, remarking to a close friend that he felt alienated by the 'the conventionally minded bourgeois with a certain ability for superficial journalism' among whom he spent his days.[26] He lost his religious faith altogether; he read philosophy, psychology and anthropology voraciously. He wrestled with Plato through his identification with the questing, philosophical hero of Charles Morgan's novel *The Fountain* (1932).[27] He was a rebellious and intellectual man who had not found his cause in life. He increasingly turned to creative writing, especially poetry and detective novels, some of which were quite successful and are still read.[28] Depressed by the worldwide economic slump and the rise of anti-Semitism in London, he did not fight to save the aeronautical publishing business he had shared with his brother. And, in 1934, he began to read the Marxist classics.

His first sustained encounter with Marxism may have been through *Viewpoint*, a Croydon-based literary review which ran for a few months in 1934, before being absorbed in October of that year into the *Left Review*, the new organ of the British section of the Writers' International.[29] But the work which most transformed his politics and world view was John Strachey's classic communist polemic, *The Coming Struggle for Power* (1932). For Christopher, any lingering affection for British imperialism or the British armed forces was impossible to retain by the end of this volume, which concludes with a rousing exhortation:

> There is no force on earth which can long prevent the workers of the world from building a new and stable civilization for themselves upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production. Nor is there anything in the geographical, industrial, cultural, or economic position of Great Britain which forbids the British workers from taking a decisive part in the establishment of world communism. The realization of this new stage in the history of mankind is not in doubt. But the immediate future of all humanity rests to no small degree in the hands of the workers of Great Britain.[30]

Christopher was persuaded. He had discovered his intellectual position and his political cause. He soon joined the Communist Party in a conversion, which his brother later said was almost overnight, 'after being struck on the head while observing a Mosley rally in Trafalgar Square.'[31] He also joined the London Library in St James's Square and never looked back. He wrote ferociously throughout the two-and-a-half years remaining to him, planning to publish under a new pen name, Christopher Caudwell (his mother's maiden name), probably to mark a break with his earlier political views and his serious commitment to Marxism. Writing continuously, he moved in November 1935 to Poplar in Tower Hamlets, East London, the traditional home of the radical dock workers who made up most of the local branch of the Communist Party's membership. At least ten of the branch members were 'coloured', which heightened the importance of fighting Oswald Mosley's fascists.[32]

Calling himself simply 'Chris Sprigg', he was a very active party member, selling the *Daily Worker* on street corners. He soon became treasurer and then branch secretary. Christopher worked in isolation from the other CPGB intellectuals of the time, who were mostly university graduates. The sole opportunity for more contact came in early 1936, when he attended some lectures on 'Marxism and Literature' held at Marx House, Clerkenwell Green. The course was run by Alick West and Douglas Garman, graduates of Cambridge University and Trinity College Dublin. respectively. West dimly recalls, in his own autobiography, a young man with clear and intelligent eyes, who in a discussion after one of the sessions said that he thought they were not thinking enough about the nature of language in considering the social character of literature.[33] Another student on the course recalls that Christopher had to give up attending on account of his duties selling the *Daily Worker* at the entrance to the Underground.[34] Nobody else attending the course seems to have had the slightest idea that Comrade Sprigg was engaged in such extensive researches of his own, and there was no further contact between them.

But Christopher was, in fact, planning a large number of compositions, as his list in a surviving notebook reveals. Enticing titles of novels include *Plato in Syracuse* and *Tiberius* as well as *Filthy Rags* and *Boom and Slump*; proposed poems include 'Prometheus' as well as 'The Revolutionaries'. Plays and books of social and literary criticism are also promised.[35] But he kept his writing life hidden from his Poplar comrades. One later remembered him as not 'quite one of us', although they 'would hang on his every word'.[36] In his unperformed script *The Way the Wind Blows*, derived from a story he had written earlier called 'We All Try', a Jewish working-class communist tells a middle-class comrade that he is not wanted: 'The workers distrust your sort, deboshed intellectuals trying to save their souls! If you really want to do propaganda, go back to your Mayfair drawing-room . . .'[37] But Christopher did not go back to his bourgeois life in journalism; the Poplar branch of the CPGB staunchly supported the Spanish republicans. Christopher left for Spain on 11 December 1936 (probably in response to John Cornford's recruitment campaign). He died two months later. A telling epitaph upon him was pronounced by Jason Gurney, a sculptor from Norfolk who survived Jarama:

> Spriggy . . . was an exceedingly modest, pleasant man whom I knew simply as a private of infantry like anybody else. I only learned subsequently that he had written five books on aviation technology, three books on philosophy and economics, together with *Illusion and Reality* which still remains one of the important books on Marxist aesthetics. In addition, he had produced seven detective stories and yet, when he was killed on the first day at Jarama, he was still under thirty.[38]

How much more might 'Spriggy' have achieved if he had, like Gurney, been wounded rather than killed on that February day in 1937?

There is no doubt that Christopher's reading in philosophy, psychology and anthropology mostly dated from about 1932, but he was already highly educated in both literature and technology. He was certainly an accomplished classicist. His elementary education was at St Dominic's Roman Catholic Preparatory School in Bognor Regis, where he would have been introduced to Latin. He left St Dominic's in the summer of 1919 to enrol as a boarder at a London school, then called Ealing Priory School. It had opened in 1902 and occupied Orchard Dene in Montpelier Road in Ealing. He would have been taught a great deal of Latin, and at least some Greek.

The Benedictine curriculum goes all the way back to St Theodore, a Greek convert to Christianity who came to Britain with Benedict in 669 CE and became

archbishop. He brought with him Greek as well as Latin classics, and a conviction that the great pagan authors had much to offer Christianity; he therefore set up schools for these learned languages in various parts of the country.[39] There is no contradiction between the philosophy that underlay Christopher's schooling and his profound sense of an ancient pagan world of art and culture lying forever just beneath the surface of the modern world, which comes over in his early short poem, 'In the Aegean':

> We passed that day on the Aegean deep,
> Those lovely children of the Cyclades,
> And thought of all the gracious forms that sleep,
> Prisoned in rock, beside those tuneful seas,
> Never to be released! for in that dust
> The enchanted chisels of Phidias rust.[40]

A traditional approach to classics, in a Victorian poetic idiom inherited from Arnold, Browning and Tennyson, with the conventional praise of Phidias' sculpture, reveals Christopher's typical middle-class education and veneration of classical art. He also asks the reader to work slightly, to decode from the reference to the Cyclades a specific pointer to the island of Paros, source of famous marble. The choice of the idea of classical *form* – the famous sculptor Phidias' 'graceful forms that sleep' – perhaps reveals Christopher's mind, even at this early, pre-Marxist period, sensing the importance of inherited forms concealed forever within ideology and culture.

With his Benedictine teachers, Christopher would have studied composition into Greek and Latin verse as well as Greek and Latin prose. His early poems in English also include versions of favourite schoolboy Latin classics, such as Catullus' poem no. 5, 'Vivamus mea Lesbia, atque amemus'.[41] Earlier we saw his rhymed, taut translation of Crinagoras' Hellenistic Greek epigram on Seleucos; two further translations of epigrams from the *Greek Anthology* show him wrestling – uncomfortably – with the challenge of reproducing the dactylic rhythm and form of the Greek elegiac couplet in English:

> O would I were a red rose that blooming where your feet go
> I might be plucked by your fingers and laid in your breast of snow

and

> O would I were as the wind that, walking where the seas flow
> You might lay your bosom and receive me as I blow.[42]

This technical interest in metrical form prefigures the work of the man who became the unquestioned pioneer in terms of developing a systematic socio-political approach to the metre of English verse, rooted in prehistoric rhythms of labour and ritual, in his study of the rhythms of bourgeois poetry in *Illusion and Reality*.[43]

In the 1920s, before he encountered Marxism, Christopher's poems share several features of the use of classical myth and literature by the famous modernists of the time. A telling example is his early poem 'Agamemnon and the poets':

(Always just past the next hill
To be reached early in the next year).
I press with longing on until
That hour when I no more shall hear

The nightingales, but be their lips
And shriek and swing among the trees,
And be the body's flesh that slips
Round the red bath with loosened knees.[44]

This is clearly a response to T.S. Eliot's 'Sweeney among the Nightingales' of 1918, in which Sweeney negotiates the barbarism of modern civilization in a café. Eliot begins with an epigraph consisting of Agamemnon's death cry as he is struck by Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*,[45] and ends with these two stanzas:

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid droppings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

Yet Christopher has bypassed Eliot in order to go back to Aeschylus (the bath in which Agamemnon died does not feature in Eliot's poem). He has used the mythical method made fashionable by Eliot, but adapted it to say something more personal and more optimistic about the experience of attempting to write poetry. He is partly figuring himself as Cassandra, whose voice and stance are compared by Aeschylus in her prophetic singing to a nightingale (1140–9), as Christopher clearly knew. But he is a Cassandra-in-waiting, hoping one day to

shriek and swing *himself* in the trees. He presses on, waiting for the time when he does not just hear the nightingales, but actually becomes their lips, at the same time as he becomes the flesh of the dying Agamemnon. The Benedictine-trained Christopher is, in effect, erasing the Platonic–Catholic distinction between mind and body, matter and art, but through a type of poetry otherwise very much of its 1920s era.

The *Oresteia*, the trilogy of plays kicked off by *Agamemnon*, haunted Christopher. When he later wrote about changes in the social function of language over time, he referred to the ancient Greek language as the 'feeling-tone of reality' expressed by 'the "god" of the early Greek tribunal',[46] by which he meant Apollo and Athena in *Eumenides*. It was to the trilogy of plays kicked off by the *Agamemnon*, the *Oresteia*, that Christopher turned later – in the early 1930s – when writing his longest and most ambitious poem, *Orestes* (originally *Orestes in Harley Street*). Any relationship between his work and the *Agamemnon* translation by Louis MacNeice, published in late 1936 (after a November production in London by the Group Theatre[47]), is probably coincidental; although MacNeice did know many Marxists and communists through W. H. Auden, Christopher, as we have seen, scarcely knew any other party intellectuals or their contacts. There had, however, been a few productions of the *Oresteia* or parts of it during his teens and early twenties. It is impossible he did not know that in February 1922, a few months before he left the Ealing school, the Chiswick Education Committee had organized a performance of *Agamemnon* and the final scene of *Libation-Bearers* as a matinee at the nearby Chiswick Empire, acted by Cambridge University students. They had at the same time shown a film of the 1921 stage production in Cambridge.[48]

The teenage years spent with his father in dismal Bradford lodgings were significant in Christopher's intellectual development. His job required him to report on criminal incidents, drunkenness, accidents and labour unrest in the factories of the area, which exposed him to a very different stratum of society from the genteel townspeople of his early years on the south coast, in literary London and at boarding school. He now devoted himself to improving the knowledge of classics he had already acquired at school and used it to explore both his literary and sexual urges. In a sonnet he wrote on his seventeenth birthday, which fuses his desire for both aesthetic and sexual potency, there are awkward references to 'Helen's breasts', to the crowning of Julius Caesar and to the ancient oracle at Memphis.[49]

His years in Bradford and before joining the CPGB are illuminated by two prose novels, both written at around the time he discovered Marxism in 1934–5.

We All Try, which has not been published, centres on a disillusioned middle-class man in his twenties named Brian Mallock. He feels parasitical on society and that his life has no meaning. He is drawn to the cause of the working class, and after a divorce and problems with alcohol eventually finds some kind of contentment working in a cobbler's shop.[50] *This My Hand* (published in 1936), by far his most profound novel, features a fictionalized female version of Christopher's younger self in Celia Harrison, the heroine of the first part. Celia is the clever daughter of a widowed Berkshire vicar. Her father teaches her Latin and Greek as well as geometry, French, history, geography and literature.[51] Having moved with her father at the age of fourteen to a parish in Tinford, an industrial town in Yorkshire, she becomes involved in social issues and leaves school. As a lover of poetry, she attends the university extension lectures at the Mechanics' Institute, and begins to review books for the local paper. She has an intellectually questing nature, and becomes dissatisfied with the answers she feels she has been offered to the world's problems, in due course joining the local Spiritualists.

All the young people in the novel are struggling with the epistemological and metaphysical crisis that afflicted the real young people who had survived the First World War, and Christopher's later antipathy to Spiritualism suggests he may have had direct personal experience of it. Another avatar of Christopher in the novel is to be found in the enigmatic figure of Charles Firth, a rich, nervous youth. He strikes the novel's anti-hero, Ian Venning (with whom he became friends in the trenches), as strange: Firth 'used always to keep a volume of Greek poetry in his pocket and would at intervals escape into it from externals'.[52] *This My Hand* also owes a substantial debt to Greek tragedy. It contains a much more heavyweight analysis of the moral issues of crime and punishment than we might expect in the average crime detective novel. One of the characters, Salmon, discusses murder, atonement, scapegoats and sacrifice, and has been described as 'a salesman with a philosophical bent', who 'acts as a kind of "chorus" in this modern tragedy'.[53]

Yet, despite such noisy clues, the scale of the classical influence upon Christopher's intellectual development has never been acknowledged. Aristotle and Plato do not feature at all in Pawling's study of the development of his dialectical theory of literature.[54] Even Francis Mulhern, who praised the 'fascinating study of Greek and Roman culture' he discovered in *Illusion and Reality*, and stressed Christopher's discussion of religion in the city state, neglected his engagement with Aristotelian aesthetics.[55] But Christopher's competence at handling authors who had written 2,000 years before in Latin and

Greek shine through both his poetry and his critical studies. His late and only overtly communist poem, 'Heil Baldwin!' (1936), a satire on the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, is framed as a *pastiche* of the *Aeneid*, opening 'Arms and the man I sing'.[56] Sullivan argues that the idea for his verse drama *Orestes* was partly inspired not by Freud's Oedipal complex but by the psychoanalytical Charles Baudouin's thoughts on how the Platonic theory of ideas retained a vestigial presence in culture centuries after the disappearance of the material circumstances which had produced it.[57]

It is true that classical authors are not prominent in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, or the essays later collected and published as *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (1949), because their focus was 'bourgeois literature' (H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, D. H. Lawrence), and their theoretical approaches profoundly informed – as Bounds has shown – by Russian critics of bourgeois art (Nikolai Bukharin, Maxim Gorky, Georgi Plekhanov, Andrei Zhdanov and Karl Radek).[58] But Greek and Latin authors *are* central to Christopher's more conceptual approach in *Illusion and Reality*. It was to Greek myth and religion that he turned when seeking to understand how art arises, and especially to the famous classicist Jane Ellen Harrison's ritualist theory of myth, which has been called the biggest single influence on Christopher's entire aesthetics.[59] In *Illusion and Reality* he discusses ancient and more recent poets alongside one another, as voices in an ongoing transhistorical dialogue: natural phenomena, in poetry, are social signs, 'the rose of Keats, of Anacreon, of Hafiz, of Ovid, of Jules Laforgue'; poetry expresses a dialectic between instinct and environment, 'rooted in real concrete social life – English, French, or Athenian'.[60]

Above all, it was to the debate between Plato and Aristotle on the nature and function of art that he intuitively took his quest for a new, all-embracing, social way of thinking about literature. The most overlooked section of *Illusion and Reality* is chapter 2, 'The Death of Mythology', which is essentially a study of Aristotle's *Poetics*. E. P. Thompson rides roughshod over the study of the *Poetics* in his otherwise penetrating study of Christopher's legacy.[61] One of the problems here is that people have read Christopher through the admiring exposition of the classical scholar George Thomson, perhaps understandably, since Thomson was a staunch defender of the dead critic at the time of the earlier attacks led by Maurice Cornforth.[62] But Thomson's own work on ancient Greek literature is much less philosophically and aesthetically engaged, and far more centred on anthropological and sociological models of the evolution of poetry from primitive magic and ritual. This has resulted in the failure of most critics, except perhaps David Margolies,[63] to recognize that Christopher's fundamental thesis in *Illusion and*

Reality is inspired by the argument between Plato and Aristotle on the topic of the relationship between the ideas, the empirically discernible world (reality) and the worlds conjured up in art (mimesis). This battle of the philosophical titans of the fourth century BCE represented a sophisticated stage in the ancient evolution of literary theory. It has left magic and ritual far behind, and discusses mimetic art as a category including sculpture, painting, poetry and theatre, all of which, as it proposes, offer imitations, in paint and stone or words and music, of things apprehended through sense in life. For Plato, these imitations, however pleasurable, are bad for humans psychologically; for Aristotle they are pleasurable, and beautiful, and can offer two distinct psychological and social benefits. It does not matter that they are *representations* of things in the real world rather than being real themselves. And, in a crucial paragraph, Christopher writes that 'Aristotle's theory of mimesis, as our analysis will show, so far from being superficial, is fundamental for an understanding of the function and method of art.'[64]

Margolies is surely correct in commenting here that what Aristotle 'means is that art's function is accomplished, not by a "pure" emotional reorganization, but by emotional reorganization in regard to the *reality* with which art deals'.[65] Christopher is here linking two parts of Aristotle's theorization of poetry. The first is that all art is fundamentally mimetic of reality, as stated in Aristotle's *Poetics* chapter 4:[66]

> Poetry seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated. We have evidence of this in the facts of experience.

The second Aristotelian principle which Christopher assimilates to his Marxism is that it is the aim specifically of *tragic* art to produce a socially beneficial function by somehow *addressing* the painful emotions aroused in tragedy (*Poetics* chapter 6): tragedy effects, through the arousal of the emotions of pity and fear, the release or relief from such emotions. Christopher has already demonstrated how attentively he has read the *Poetics* in his insistence that 'the categories of literature are not eternal, any more than the classification of systematic biology; both must change, as the objects of systematisation evolve and alter in the number and characteristics of their species'.[67] This teleological model of the rise and evolution of genres is almost identical to Aristotle's teleological description of the emergence and development of tragedy and

comedy in the *Poetics*. But there are other things that have impressed Christopher about Aristotle, especially his analysis of literature *as a social product* – a body of cultural data to be analysed for what it can tell us in its own right, rather than as an expression of the individual writer's subjectivity, or even the influence it might have had on an individual subjectivity:

> Aristotle, with his extraverted mind turned firmly on the object, was more interested in the created thing, e.g. the play – than in the man who was influenced by it or who produced it. Thus his angle of attack is aesthetically correct; he does not approach literature like a psychologist or a psycho-analyst.[68]

I need to stress, of course, that there were numerous other influences on Christopher besides Aristotle, and these extended beyond the writings of Marx and Engels themselves to thinkers including, most importantly, I. A. Richards and Bukharin. But Aristotle's *Poetics* shaped the very *form* taken by the questions Christopher asked himself, as well as the answers that he formulated.

David Margolies concludes in *The Function of Literature* that the British criticism of the 1930s, despite the important contributions of Ralph Fox and Alick West, 'did not succeed in producing a Marxist aesthetic'. The questions they did not ask, but Christopher did, included 'what is literature?', 'what is its social function?' and 'where does it fit into the human world?'[69] In the case of the first two questions, Christopher found the model for them in Aristotle's theories that literature develops across time according to contingent historical circumstances and that it is mimetic. When it comes to the second question, he found not only the question in Aristotle but also the answer – that literature's function is educative and that it affects beneficial emotional change. What he added to the Aristotelian model, of course, was the analytical category of class and the principle of the dialectical interpenetration between matter and the immaterial content of human minds.

Christopher's thoughts moved independently of the regular tramlines of the contemporary debate on classics. He certainly did not align himself with the elite Pound/Eliot view of the inherent superiority of Greek and Roman culture, as expressed in Eliot's essay advocating the traditional classical curriculum in 'Modern Education and the Classics' in 1932.[70] The egalitarianism of his poem 'Classic Encounter' and its unheroic dead hoplites underlines his different approach. But nor did he ever suggest – as did some of his peers – that using classical literature might be to foster links with cultural property so thoroughly hijacked by the ruling classes as to call its place on the socialist agenda into

question. His independent position is thrown into relief by comparison with the revulsion against traditional classics and all it stood for as expressed in most other left-leaning writers of the 1930s.[71] An important note was struck by Day Lewis in his article 'An Expensive Education' in *Left Review* for February 1937, when he attacked Latin as a bourgeois instrument for the retention of power. Gavin Ewart's poetic voice in 1939 claimed a desperation to grow up and quit the academy, 'To go, to leave the classics and the buildings, / So tall and false and intricate with spires.'[72]

MacNeice, despite being a university lecturer in Classics, professed himself happy in 'Out of the Picture' that the archaic poet Pindar was dead and gone, and refused in *Autumn Journal* section XIII (1939) to defend the classical snobberies:[73]

> We learned that a gentleman never misplaces his accents . . .
> That the boy on the Modern side is merely a parasite
> But the classical student is bred to the purple, his training in syntax
> Is also a training in thought
> And even in morals; if called to the bar or the barracks
> He always will do what he ought,
> And knowledge, besides, should be prized for the sake of knowledge:
> Oxford crowded the mantelpiece with gods –
> Scaliger, Heinsius, Dindorf, Bentley and Wilamowitz –
> As we learned our genuflections for Honour Mods.

Such breast-beating about the exclusivity of classics seems to have bypassed Christopher altogether. Perhaps this was because he was forced to leave school early; perhaps it was because he had been earning his own living since his teens; perhaps it was because of his isolation from the fashionable literary 'scene'.

But perhaps it was most of all to do with his respect for the cultural discussions in Russia that he would have heard about in the Communist Party. For in Russia, despite the similar place that classics had held in the elite and reactionary curriculum under the Tsars, the leading lights of the cultural revolution in 1917, above all Anatoly Lunacharsky, had insisted on the importance of Ancient Greece and Rome in the teeth of opposition from more extreme members of the organization established to plan culture in the new Soviets, *Proletkult*.[74] Lenin, influenced by his friendship with Lunacharsky, famously enshrined 'everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human culture' in the fourth item of the resolution he drew up for the First All-Russian Congress of Proletkult, which met in Moscow from 5 to 12 October 1920.

> Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as the final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, can be recognized as the development of a genuine proletarian culture.[75]

Christopher quoted this when writing to Elizabeth Beard about his project for a book called *Studies in a Dying Culture*. He felt the need to immerse himself in the entire cultural history of the world, including the Roman Republic and the French *fin-de-siècle*, if he were to understand the historical changes taking place under his contemporaries' noses: in imagining a richer culture in the socialist future, he writes that he has taken profoundly to heart 'Lenin's remark, "Communism becomes an empty phrase, a mere façade, and the Communist a mere bluffer, if he has not worked over in his consciousness the whole inheritance of human knowledge." '[76] Given his love of and immersion in classics, and the exceptional promise of the dialectical and class-conscious Aristotelianism of his theory in *Illusion and Reality*, Christopher's death before he could develop his full potential was a particularly dreadful loss to those of us who deny that the Greek and Latin classics are inherently any more reactionary than any other literature. He fully deserves to be rescued from what E. P. Thompson called in another context 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.[77] I feel it is Christopher himself speaking when he concludes his *Orestes* with Athena ascending on the theatrical crane, saying as she departs: 'Well, I had quite a lot more still to say.'[78]

15

Staging the Haitian Revolution in London

Britain, the West Indies and C.L.R. James's *Toussaint Louverture*

Justine McConnell

On 16 March 1936, an actor onstage at London's Westminster Theatre proclaimed 'Everyone talks of Toussaint. Who is Toussaint?'[1] The 'actor' was C.L.R. James, renowned Marxist theorist and author of the play being performed; his presence on stage had been necessitated only hours earlier by the absence of the usual actor Rufus E. Fennell. Yet James's question, or, more accurately, the question of the character he portrayed, General Macoya, is an apt one. An officer in the Spanish army, Macoya announces himself (in a comically repeated refrain) as 'the subject of three kings, the King of Congo, who is father of all the blacks, the King of France, who is my father, and the King of Spain, who is my mother' (59, 64, 66). By the end of the play, San Domingo (now Haiti) will be free; Toussaint will have led the slave revolt that brought this freedom, and will have died imprisoned by the French as a result; and the new leader of Haiti, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, will rip the white from the French flag just before the final curtain falls:

> *(Pointing to the black)* This is for the blacks, and this *(pointing to the red)* is for our mulatto brothers. Black and red. But this *(pointing to the white)* I trample under my feet. *(Frenzied cheering.)* Henceforth, this is our flag! (133)[2]

This play, written by C.L.R. James four years prior to his far more famous work on the same topic, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), was entitled *Toussaint Louverture* (1934). Its subtitle was the oft-repeated ascription of the Haitian Revolution as 'the only successful slave revolt in history'. Performed in 1936, the script was then believed lost until Christian Høgsbjerg, researching his PhD on James in 2005, stumbled across it in the papers of Jock Haston at the University of Hull.[3] Prior to this discovery, the existence of the play was well known, but it had frequently been elided with James's

later play, co-written with Dexter Lyndersay – an adaptation of James's highly renowned history of the revolution, *The Black Jacobins* (1938).[4] As a result, a number of works of earlier scholarship cite from James's play, referring to it either as *The Black Jacobins* or as *Toussaint Louverture*, and as having been performed in 1936 or in 1967. But when specific quotations or references are given it is always to the later co-authored play, *The Black Jacobins*, that they should rightly refer.[5]

The 1934 play's connection with communism, social reform, and activists of the era can be traced via three main figures involved in its production: James himself, Paul Robeson who took the leading role, and Sergei Eisenstein, at whose suggestion Robeson first because interested in portraying the Haitian hero, Toussaint. Its engagement with classics is a dual one, for the play depicts a chorus of slaves modelled on the choruses of Greek drama, and its plot portrays the life of Toussaint L 'Ouverture, commonly known as 'the black Spartacus'. This 'black Spartacus' label dates back to Toussaint's own era and persisted long after. In 1846, for example, George Dibdin Pitt had staged his blackface minstrel play, *Toussaint L'Ouverture, or The Black Spartacus* at the Britannia Theatre in London. But it was Laveaux, the French governor-general of Saint-Domingue, who first gave Toussaint this epithet when he referred to him as 'that black Spartacus prophesied by Raynal, whose destiny is to avenge the outrages upon his race'.[6] The work referred to here is Abbé Raynal's *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (*The Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of the Europeans in the Two Indies*) (1770), which was not only considered by the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson to be invaluable in promoting the cause of abolition in England in the 1770s,[7] but is also directly cited in James's play itself.

> (He opens his book again. He reads, scarcely looking at the page, so often has he read the passage.)
>
> 'A courageous chief only is wanted. Where is he? That great man whom Nature owes to her vexed, oppressed, and tormented children. Where is he? He will appear, doubt it not. [. . .] Everywhere people will bless the name of the hero, who shall have re-established the rights of the human race.'
>
> (69–70)

James would cite from Abbé Raynal again, and discuss Toussaint's repeated reading of the work, in *The Black Jacobins*.[8] Indeed, John R. Beard's 1853 *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture* also includes not only mention of, but also an illustration depicting Toussaint reading Raynal's work; when this was republished in the United States in 1863, the volume also included the first English translation of Toussaint's

autobiography.[9] James's play emphasizes not only that Toussaint is the only one of the rebel leaders who is literate (62), but also that, in addition to Abbé Raynal, he carries a copy of Caesar's *Commentaries* with him.[10] When Macoya mistakes this for the Bible (62), the audience realizes that Julius Caesar's accounts of war are of more use to Toussaint than a religious text would be.

James's original play, *Toussaint Louverture*, is quite different from the later one, and was a milestone for British theatre. It also occupied a very different space in the rapidly changing global history of the mid-twentieth century. For, while *Toussaint Louverture* was performed in 1936, with the British Empire still desperately clinging to life and, most importantly, with the Second Italo-Ethiopian War still going on, the later play, *The Black Jacobins*, was first staged in post-Independence Nigeria in 1967 at the University of Ibadan. It is the former play on which this chapter will focus, considering the ways in which the play utilized classical forms and literature both to depict that time of momentous social change in the Caribbean and across the world, and to urge social reform and racial equality in 1930s Britain.

C.L.R. James arrived in England from Trinidad in 1932, and by 1933 was living in London and had become a member of a Trotskyist group. Prior to leaving Trinidad, he had begun campaigning against imperialism and in favour of independence for Caribbean nations. It was within this context of his own burgeoning socialism and anti-imperialism that he began writing *Toussaint Louverture*. The play, written and staged as it was in England but set in Haiti, and protesting against European oppression of the West Indies both past and present, demonstrates the international scope of the communist struggle for social reform during the 1930s. By the time the play was staged in 1936, its anti-colonialist message had been brought into even sharper focus by what was then known as the 'Abyssinian War' (and later as the Italo-Ethiopian War just mentioned), when Italy, under the leadership of Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia and thereby prompted the Abyssinian Crisis within the League of Nations. As Stuart Hall has remarked, Italy's 'invasion spawned the League for the Protection of Ethiopia and *Toussaint L'Ouverture*; the play that James wrote and Robeson performed was staged under the auspices of the league at a small theatre in London'.[11]

Not only that, but James, alongside George Padmore (who had been editor of the communist publication *The Negro Worker* in the early 1930s), Amy Ashwood-Garvey and Jomo Kenyatta, soon formed the International African Friends of Abyssinia, who became highly influential in the Pan-African movement, which was entwined with communism. James was vociferous in his opposition not only to Italy's actions in Ethiopia, but to the European response to them that emanated

from the Committee of Five appointed by the League of Nations to report on the threat of war. Of their proposals, he wrote, with thick sarcasm,

> Thus the local population being disarmed will be taught the proper respect due by black men to white in imperialist Africa.[12]

A similar sentiment will be echoed in *Toussaint Louverture* when the British officer, General Maitland, will group white people against black, over and above national animosities:

> I want to speak to you of a matter which concerns all of us who rule in these colonies. I am speaking now, not as an Englishman, not as an enemy of France, but as a white man and one with the same colonial interests as yours. This General Toussaint Louverture, at the head of his black army, is a danger to us all. (83)

The play, as the reviewer for *The Stage* regretted,[13] does not allow any European character to emerge in a positive light; given the historical events that the drama retells, this is scarcely surprising. Combined with the contemporary world events that James was witnessing, it is clear that, for him – as for the Pan-Africanists – anti-imperialist action must be undertaken by the proletariat. Imperialism, in other words, is a clear battleground within the class struggle:

> Workers of Europe, peasants and workers of Africa and of India, sufferers from imperialism all over the world, all anxious to help the Ethiopian people, organise yourselves independently, and by your own sanctions, the use of your own power, assist the Ethiopian people. Their struggle is only now beginning.
>
> *Let us fight against not only Italian imperialism, but the other robbers and oppressors, French and British imperialism*.[14]

The parallels with the Haitian Revolution are clear, and it is surely no coincidence that James's play (more than many others on the topic) foregrounds the competing imperial powers, which, in their treachery and self-interest, do indeed merge into a scarcely distinguishable group of imperialists. Raphael Dalleo has argued that, in addition to the Abyssinian War, which only began after the date James claims to have finished writing the play,[15] the US occupation of Haiti (1915–34) was in his mind as he wrote.[16] This argument could be supported by the presence in the play of Tobias Lear, the American consul, who is otherwise a slightly surprising inclusion. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Sergei Eisenstein, whose efforts to make a film on the subject of the Haitian Revolution will be discussed later, explicitly identified the American occupation of Haiti as

a block to his progress in finding support for the project in Hollywood: 'When I was in America I wanted to make a film of this rising, but it was impossible: nowadays Haiti is virtually a colony of the United States.'[17]

At the time of the revolution, the land that became Haiti was the French colony of Saint-Domingue; yet the British powers in Jamaica and the Spanish powers on the eastern side of the island, which later became the Dominican Republic, were also involved. While the Haitian Revolution drew inspiration from the French Revolution, the revolt that Toussaint led also compelled the French revolutionaries to confront the wider-reaching consequences of their political actions. Despite abolishing slavery in 1794, Napoleon restored it in 1802, and only two weeks later, on 6 June that year, Toussaint was arrested, transported to France and imprisoned there. He died the following April, but the revolution which he had led was not defeated, and on 1 January 1804 Dessalines declared the former colony independent, and reclaimed its former Arawak name of Haiti.

James's socialist awakening coincided with his arrival in Britain – not by chance – and it is as a social and political theorist that he is most renowned. His fervent anti-Stalinist Marxism, and his passionate advocacy of Pan-Africanism, has been the subject of much scholarly work, to the relative neglect of his creative writing. What is surprising about such neglect is that it disregards the important Marxist notion of the revolutionary responsibility of the artist. This responsibility is all too evident in *Toussaint Louverture*, which was clearly written as part of James's push for social reform. Only the year before the play was staged, Georgi Dimitrov had foregrounded the need for the struggle against fascism to be fought in the cultural as well as the political sphere, when he addressed the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935.[18] It is clear, then, that the affinities with Soviet communism should not be underestimated, and that these connections highlight the poignant alignment of the abolition of slavery with free elections, freedom of speech and the rule of law as examples of 'proto-communist' social progress triggered by popular radicalism.[19]

While David Scott is right to identify the 'mythopoetic character' of *The Black Jacobins* (the history), and his declared interest in the work 'less for its facts than for its literary-political project' is an exceptionally rewarding one,[20] the publication of *Toussaint Louverture* invites fresh examination of this literary work as a work of drama. Indeed, years before *Toussaint Louverture* was rediscovered, Kara Rabbitt had already identified the creative and performative impulse of James in *The Black Jacobins*, when she discussed his creation of 'a dramatic figure of the historical one of Toussaint-Louverture' and the way in which he imposes an 'Aristotelian tragic structure' on the work.[21] Stuart Hall, too, had observed of *The*

Black Jacobins (1938) that 'to imagine this history, James himself had classical Greek tragedy and Shakespeare at the very forefront of his mind at every turn'.[22]

The play resonates with classical antiquity on a number of levels. It is not only James's classical engagement that comes to the fore, but also the well-attested classical education and reading of Toussaint himself, as we have seen. Furthermore, discussions of slavery, both for and against, had long since turned to antiquity to support their arguments, and the identification of Toussaint with Spartacus was commonplace. But James extends the model more broadly, and along specifically literary lines, when he compares Toussaint to 'Prometheus, Hamlet, Lear, Phèdre, Ahab', before concluding that 'Toussaint is in a lesser category' on account of the strategic error (rather than the 'moral weakness') which caused his downfall.[23] James's choice of tragic heroes here is evidence of his recourse to 'the Western canon' as a whole, and to notions of tragedy derived from Aristotle but extended to other times and media, yet the mention of Prometheus is particularly telling. As Edith Hall has shown, Prometheus became a prominent motif in the abolition movement at the end of the eighteenth century and the start of the nineteenth.[24] He was also adopted in wider spheres of revolutionary politics, not least by Karl Marx, who was pictured as a chained Prometheus being tortured by an eagle of Prussian censorship.[25] At a time when James was extensively reading the works of Trotsky, and from there tracing the roots of socialist thought back through Lenin to Marx, the Greek hero whom he had first admired in his reading of Aeschylus would have been an appealing figure through which to view Toussaint anew.[26]

James's classical education had been rigorous and traditional in the way of the 'sound colonial education' referenced by Derek Walcott in 'The Schooner *Flight*' (1979), but he continually downplayed the influence of such formal modes of learning. As Emily Greenwood has suggested, equally important to him was his more autodidactic approach, facilitated by his family, who instilled in him a love of literature. James's discussion of his education in *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) suggests a rejection of the colonially imposed curriculum combined with a simultaneous embrace of the European canon, from the works of classical antiquity to those of Victorian England.[27] While it is James's works of the 1950s and 1960s that develop an analogy between Trinidadian society and Athenian democracy, as Greenwood has illuminatingly discussed,[28] it is worth considering *Toussaint Louverture* in the light of its engagement with classics as well.

In fact, James's own brand of Marxism was, as the philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis has discussed, not only fervently anti-Stalin (a direction which led him to Trotskyism, in the first instance), but was also significantly informed by his views of Athenian democracy.[29] For James, classical antiquity had much to

teach the modern world about just and democratic society, as his 1956 essay 'Every Cook Can Govern: A Study of Democracy in Ancient Greece' exemplifies.[30] Of importance to James in this essay is the way in which the winners of the Great Dionysia were decided by the people, rather than – as he imagines they would be in the modern era – by 'professors, successful writers, and critics'.[31] Indeed, for James, a cricket correspondent and passionate enthusiast, it is that sport which comes closest to the ritual of the drama festivals in ancient Athens:

> Once every year for four days the tens of thousands of Athenian citizens sat in the open air on the stone seats at the side of the Acropolis and from sunrise to sunset watched the plays of the competing dramatists. All that we have to correspond is a Test Match.[32]

In keeping with his high estimation of the citizen body is also what we can deduce to be James's high opinion of that distinctive feature of Greek drama: the chorus.

Distinctive, though not exclusive, to Greek theatre, the presence of a chorus is also particularly prominent in African drama. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, for example, has described how in pre-colonial Kenya

> In song and dance they acted out the battle scenes for those who were not there and for the warriors to relive the glory, drinking in the communal admiration and gratitude. [. . .] there were stories – often with a chorus – to point the fate of those threatening the communal good.[33]

James's play *Toussaint Louverture* also features a chorus, though it is not explicitly labelled as such. He describes this 'chorus' of slaves at the start of the second scene, with the following stage directions:

> *A little clearing is dotted with groups of Negro slaves. They, the Negro slaves, are the most important characters in the play. Toussaint did not make the revolt. It was the revolt that made Toussaint*.
>
> (54)

James is here adamant that his play is all about the collective, that they are 'the most important characters in the play'. Indeed, speaking of Eisenstein in 1954, James reiterated this view of the centrality of the masses:

> He makes the mass itself his hero. [. . .] from the very first time I saw *Battleship Potemkin* many, many years ago, the scene on the steps of Odessa has not been the greatest scene of the film. I was fascinated by the spectacle of the thousands upon thousands of people bursting from all parts of the screen.[34]

Later, in *The Black Jacobins*, James would elaborate on the way the former slaves of San Domingo came together as a collective body to form a chorus:

> The Greek tragedians could always go to their gods for a dramatic embodiment of fate, the *dike* which rules over a world neither they nor we ever made. But not Shakespeare himself could have found such a dramatic embodiment of fate as Toussaint struggled against, Bonaparte himself; nor could the furthest imagination have envisaged the entry of the chorus, of the ex-slaves themselves, as the arbiters of their own fate.[35]

This articulation of popular radicalism recalls less the function of the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy itself (who tend not to oppose the political order),[36] and more that seen at the time of the French Revolution, particularly – as Fiona Macintosh has shown – in the corps de ballet.[37] It is particularly fitting that James employs this kind of resistant and oppositional chorus, familiar from the festivals of the Revolution, for his play, which is set at exactly that time, and which is so intricately involved with the events that were taking place in revolutionary France.

Christian Høgsbjerg makes the connection with an ancient Greek chorus in his introduction to the play (15). He notes that the beating drums which underlie much of the drama not only signify the enslaved masses who will liberate themselves by the revolution, but also that 'the chorus of ex-slaves seems almost to be using the drums to comment on the ideas put forward by their leaders' (15). The insight is a valuable one, and prompts consideration of the underappreciated work that James intended this chorus to do in the play. How successfully James achieved this is uncertain: none of the reviewers make any mention of a 'chorus', though they do frequently comment that there were a large number of black actors onstage.[38] The chorus in Greek drama has been a notoriously difficult concept for twentieth-century audiences,[39] and James scarcely helps his viewer by not giving his chorus any words at all, apart from their echoing of Dessalines' cry (and motto of so many revolutions), 'Liberty or death!' (56; 132). Nevertheless, it is not only his later ascription in *The Black Jacobins* that supports the argument that James was indeed consciously intending to portray a new kind of Greek chorus in this play, or even his description of the centrality of the chorus in Greek drama ('In the art of the Greek city state, where individual and universal have achieved some balanced relation, it is the chorus upon which the whole dramatic action depends').[40] It is also, in addition to the music of the drumbeat, the way that James portrays them moving. Very early on in the play (Act 1, scene 3), Dessalines is seen training the slaves to work together as a military collective.

Following Toussaint's advice, he has instigated the use of a whistle to instruct the men in which direction to march. The initial results are somewhat confused, but then the stage directions describe a scene that is certainly a kind of dance:

> *The soldiers march. Boukman blows uncertainly, but the soldiers continue to march. Dessalines pulls the whistle from him and blows twice. The soldiers turn about and march back. Dessalines blows three times and the soldiers come to a halt; he blows once and they march away. Macoya, Jean-François, etc., all applaud, and Dessalines, greatly pleased, salutes.*
>
> (58)

Music and dancing were both integral parts of the ancient Greek chorus; with the marching and the drums, James replicates both. This allows him to align the slaves of the Haitian Revolution with the collective bodies represented in so many Greek dramas, be they the elders of the city in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the slave women in Euripides' *Ion*, or, most aptly given their centrality, the Danaids in Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*. It also enables James to place his drama in a genealogy of performance that can be traced back to fifth-century BCE Athens.

However, if this connection with the choruses of Greek drama is not perceived, then the wordless role of the slaves in *Toussaint Louverture* is problematic. For Laura Harris, James has a problem. He may indeed have remarked that the revolt made Toussaint, rather than vice versa (quoted above). But because James focussed his retellings of the Haitian Revolution on Toussaint, those who were truly most responsible for the revolt, the masses are to some extent eclipsed. [41] Despite citing James's later suggestion in 'Notes on American Civilization' (1949) that what is required in order to create work that is truly of the masses is a combination of Aristophanes and cinema,[42] Harris does not pursue the idea that it may not be only the 'democratic' nature of ancient drama that is in James's mind here, but also the chorus. James's ambition is for the author to function as a mere conduit of the people, which itself is a kind of reflection of Toussaint's aims to be a voice for the masses, but not an irreplaceable or even a prioritized one:

> You can defeat an army, but you cannot defeat a people in arms. Do you think an army could drive those hundreds of thousands back into the fields? You have got rid of one leader. But there are two thousand other leaders to be got rid of as well, and two thousand more when those are killed.
>
> (127)

As Harris interestingly concludes, just such a merging of author and audience as that at which James aims was described by W. E. B. Du Bois in his account of a 'Southern Negro Revival' in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903).[43] Yet this is surely also a role of the ancient Greek chorus, as the *scholion* to Euripides' *Medea*, line 823, makes clear when it describes the chorus as 'the voice of the poet'.[44] James sensed this, and chose to make use of it in his own drama. This should also be related to Schlegel's 'idealized spectator', by which the chorus 'conveys to the actual spectator a lyrical and musical expression of his own emotions'.[45] This view also resonated with James, who declared that in films 'We have lost the chorus which was the audience on stage'.[46] The chorus functions, then, as the connection between actors and audience, or, as so serendipitously demonstrated by James having to take to the stage as an actor in his own play, between the author and the audience.

The 1936 production of *Toussaint Louverture*, which is – as yet – the only time that it has been staged, took place at the Westminster Theatre in London and starred the renowned actor Paul Robeson. This was the first time that professional black actors had performed on the British stage in a play written by a black playwright, making it a historic production. An often-overlooked precedent had been set three years earlier, however, when the Jamaican activist and writer Una Marson directed her play, *At What a Price* (1932), with a cast of amateur actors. These actors were all members of the League of Coloured Peoples, and the play was initially staged at the YMCA, before being transferred to the West End for a short, three-night run.[47]

Robeson's reputation as a star had long since been established, particularly by his performance in the musical *Show Boat* (London, 1928; Broadway Revival, 1932; film, 1936) as well as Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (New York, 1924) and *The Emperor Jones* (New York and London, 1924; film, 1933), the latter of which – coincidentally – was inspired in part by the life of Henri Christophe, Toussaint's fellow leader of the slave revolution. Not since Ira Aldridge had performed on the London stage in the first half of the nineteenth century had a black actor received such high acclaim, nor – remarkably – had a black actor played Othello.[48] In Aldridge's time, Britain's abolition of slavery made it seem a more hospitable place for African-American actors than they would find in the United States. For Robeson, living in London a century later, laws of segregation may not have been in place as they were in America, but racism was undoubtedly present. Refused seating at the Savoy Grill on one occasion, Robeson released a press statement, and began a campaign against racial discrimination. When he travelled to the

Soviet Union a few years later, the lack of racism he felt there prompted him to reflect that

> Here I am not a Negro but a human being [. . .] Here, for the first time in my life, I walk in full human dignity. You cannot imagine what that means to me as a Negro.[49]

For Robeson, the socialism of the Soviet Union and its lack of racial discrimination went hand in hand, as he discussed in an interview in the communist paper *The Daily Worker* in 1935:

> This is home to me. I feel more kinship to the Russian people under their new society than I ever felt anywhere else. It is obvious that there is no terror here, that all the masses of every race are contented and support their government.[50]

The Soviet film-maker and theorist, Sergei Eisenstein, who had invited Robeson to Russia and to whom he made the former, much-quoted remark, first suggested the idea of a project centred on the story of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Eisenstein had hoped that Robeson would take the lead role in a film he wished to direct about the Haitian Revolution.[51] Tentatively titled *Black Majesty* by Eisenstein (after John W. Vandercook's 1928 biography of Henri Christophe, who became first king of Haiti following the revolution and the assassination of Dessalines), and later *The Black Consul* (reflecting a new focus on Toussaint, which had been made by Anatoli Vinogradov's novel of the same name), it was submitted to the export catalogue by Boris Shumyatsky as *Black Napoleon*, but was never made.[52] In fact, as James cites in *The Black Jacobins*, Toussaint himself suggested that he was a Caribbean counterpart to Napoleon: 'If Bonaparte is the first man in France, Toussaint is the first man of the Archipelago of the Antilles.'[53]

For Eisenstein, cinema stood in a direct line of descent from classical antiquity, and its power was innately political. In his essay 'Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today' (1944), he discusses this historical lineage:

> Let Dickens and the whole ancestral array, going back as far as the Greeks and Shakespeare, be superfluous reminders that both Griffith and our cinema prove our origins to be not solely as of Edison and his fellow inventors, but as based on an enormous cultural past; each part of this past in its own moment of world history has moved forward the great art of cinematography.[54]

This genealogy stands alongside the political undercurrents that inform so much of Eisenstein's work, and which he discusses in *Nonindifferent Nature*, where he articulates art's role in the quest for social reform:

> Along the path of an imaginary abolishing of contradictions in an ecstatic experience of *pathos*, man achieves what is a presentiment of the final aim of his efforts – the destruction of the social contradictions that has been approaching since the fall of tribal structure.
>
> This unquenchable desire finds a temporary satisfaction in the *pathos* of artworks and art forms.[55]

Following the disappointment of not being able to bring *Black Majesty*/*Black Napoleon* to fruition, and to bring to the screen 'the destruction of social contradictions' which Eisenstein discusses, Robeson readily agreed to take the lead role in *Toussaint Louverture* when James approached him eighteen months later with his play. Although the play is not a wholehearted success when read on the page, reviews from the time suggest that Robeson did much to help invigorate it. Notwithstanding the caution with which reviews must always be treated – and the political bias of many of the reviews of *Toussaint Louverture* are particularly transparent – they do shed invaluable light on the way the play was received and the socio-political environment of the time.[56] It is not only the fact that nearly all insist on emphasizing that James is a black writer, though his specifically Caribbean background is of less interest to them. Compare, for example, the reviewer in *The Stage*, who begins by declaring that the Haitian Revolution is 'a page of history all but forgotten' and goes on to remark, in a fit of racist pique,

> The play is altogether too propagandist. Propaganda – in this case the cause of the negro races, is all very well in its proper place, but it is not permissible in a play which purports to be substantially true to history. The coloured races have certainly been persecuted by the whites, but the author's bias in their favour would appear to deny the whites a shred of nobility of character or honesty of purpose. In his play the blacks are white and the whites are black.[57]

The final sentence is ugly in the extreme, but that it was not perceived as being so by the author is evidenced by the generally positive overall assessment of the review. On the other hand, the *Glasgow Herald* remarked that, far from being forgotten, Toussaint as 'one of the greatest figures in negro history was brought to life by Paul Robeson'.[58] A fact on which all seem to agree is the greatness of

Robeson, which is exemplified by the unquestioned logic of one reviewer's sentiment (which is echoed in various ways by many of the others) that 'The fault cannot be with the actors, since Mr. Paul Robeson is Toussaint.'[59]

If the fault was not with Robeson, several reviewers do place it at James's door. Although not wholly negative about the play, a number remark on its being 'unevenly written', 'artless and therefore dull' and 'ponderous'.[60] The reviewer at the *Evening News* picks up on, and criticizes, a quality that we may recognize as being characteristic not just of 'chronicle plays', as he suggests, but also of Greek tragedy, with its off-stage violence and long messenger speeches:

> The weakness of this chronicle play, as of so many other chronicle plays, is that all the action happens 'off'. Toussaint has little to do but utter noble sentiments and gesticulate over the view of distant battles, concealed sufferings, invisible sieges and assaults.[61]

Such a description could be seen as a fairly accurate, if uncharitable, view of a play like Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, with its extensive descriptions voiced by the messenger scout. If James's play failed to lure the *Evening News* reviewer, part of this failure could well have been a result of James's tragic template, derived from the Greek tragedians, which induced him to include quasi-messenger speeches and that kind of tragic chorus. The difficulty of incorporating these forms into a new drama, and James's own inexperience in writing for the stage, rendered the reception of the play only moderate.

Nevertheless, James's passionate attachment to Greek drama, which for him was intricately bound in with his socialist political ideology, is crucial not just to *Toussaint Louverture*, but also to his more successful history, *The Black Jacobins*. The play, after all, combines distinctive features of classical drama to tell the story of the most famous leader of a slave revolt since Spartacus. The collectivity of James's chorus, and even the very effort to write drama (rather than the diverse range of other genres which occupied the rest of his career, from fiction, to history, to biography, to essays, to political theory), signify his fervent belief that fifth-century Athens offered a model for social change in a number of respects. Staging the play in London in 1936, with the premier African American actor of the time – also an outspoken communist – in the leading role, James offered his own intervention into global politics, the struggle for social reform, and the need to combat imperialism, racism and social injustice.

16

Yesterday's Men

Labour's Modernizing Elite from the 1960s to Classical Times

Michael Simpson

Harold Wilson's Labour administrations in the UK began in October 1964 with the explicit project of modernizing both the national economy, by the application of science to industry, and the social fabric of the country, by bold policies on housing and education.[1] The industrial appliance of science was to be effected, in Wilson's purple phrase, by 'the white heat of technology'.[2] In the event, slum clearance proceeded apace, the nation's housing stock was 'improved' by controversial modern developments, equal pay for women was passed into law, non-selective comprehensive education was introduced at secondary level and the Open University was created; on the social agenda, capital punishment was abolished, homosexuality was legalized and censorship, particularly of the theatre, was liberalized.

Creating and driving these policies was a cabinet widely regarded, then and since, as being of the highest intellectual calibre. But several of these talents, committed to modernity and the difficult business of getting there, shared an academic background in the disciplines of Classics and a consequent cultural acquaintance with the Greek and Roman classics themselves. Within these leading politicians, there was a radical intersection of political modernity and cultural antiquity. A powerful implication of this intersection, as we shall see, is that any supposition of a classical education being correlated with the right of the political spectrum is spectacularly short-circuited. While there may indeed be such a general tendency, the Wilson administrations pose a highly visible challenge to any supposed correlation.

Bearing out this tendency in the present, Boris Johnson, mayor of London, publicly burnishes both his political credentials as a Conservative and his cultural credentials as a (former) classicist, in calculated pursuit of the leadership

of the parliamentary Conservative Party. This ideological association of the politically conservative and the culturally classical within the British political class has some considerable historical gravity behind it: Enoch Powell, Conservative minister and maverick, was known for his classical accomplishments, as was Quintin Hogg, another leading Conservative politician of the 1960s. But our concern here will be with the different names, and political party, of Anthony Crosland, Richard Crossman, Denis Healey, Douglas Jay and Michael Stewart.

My first premise of an intersection between political modernity and classical antiquity in these figures, once it is brought into contact with the polarity of radical versus conservative, clearly upsets the standard correlations between modern and radical and, conversely, between classical and conservative. It is this intersection, or convergence, of the poles of modernity and antiquity that short-circuits the usual correlations between these two polarities. The next of the opening moves in my argument is to establish a second premise, which runs partly counter to the first: the convergence of the poles of modernity and antiquity within the political figures above is not a reconciliation of them, but, rather, a fraught and continuing negotiation between them.

Although these five former classicists can be understood to have become eligible for high political office at least partly in virtue of their classical attainments, owing to the cultural power then ascribed to Classics, the ruling order within which they had been promoted was not one that they endorsed, but, rather, one that they vigorously sought to reform, even to the extent of challenging the prestige of Classics itself as a preparation for such office. This specific challenge, which may be seen to instantiate a reforming orientation against the larger social order, was vested in one official body and the text that it produced. The five ex-classicists were all senior members of the government that urgently commissioned the Fulton Report (1968) on the make-up of the British Civil Service, for which a classical education at Oxford or Cambridge had previously been deemed a peerless preparation. It was the Fulton Committee, working from 1966 to 1968 under a modernizing brief, that recommended the increased recruitment of 'specialists', such as economists, as against the earlier premium set upon 'generalists' or humanists, including, most prominently, classicists. Given that this recommendation was virtually implicit within the inquiry, here was a government prepared to act against a part of its own background in the service of modernization.[3] Though officials rather than politicians were covered by the Fulton Report, the wider logic encompassed politicians too.

Since there was a conjunction between modernity and antiquity within several senior ministers in the reforming Wilson governments, and since this

conjunction was potentially contradictory, some large questions are triggered. Did this shared cultural experience of the classics condition the thinking of these policymakers? If so, to what extent, and how? And, if so, how did this traditional background fit, or not fit, with the ideal of modernity and the political means of realizing it by way of the newly promoted social science of economics?

In pursuing these questions, this chapter traces the profile of classics and classical literature in the educational backgrounds, writings, conversations and cultural behaviour of the five individuals named above.[4] What emerges is an account of a cultural–political subgroup, deriving from a limited variety of social backgrounds, whose approach to and knowledge of the classics preceded their common political project of modernization, and who sought, in varying degrees, to deploy their privileges in the service of a more equal society. The operative tensions in this account are between ancient and modern, between progressive and conservative, and between elite and mass culture. Already my argument has begun, with two premises about the first of these tensions, and how that fluctuating tension might bear on the second; the third tension will figure much later. My argument will develop broadly as follows: Classics, as an institutionalized discipline, provided an iconic phase to be transcended in the professional careers of these men; meanwhile, the classics themselves presented concepts, institutions, events, images and words that these same men could neither transcend nor merely use, because the political mission to remake the present as a more satisfactory future for more people demanded that this past, among others, be confronted, critically and creatively.[5] This present rounds on the past dialectically, for the sake of a future that will be neither, yet built from both. Beyond the body of this argument, my conclusion will be that, in at least one or two cases, episodes and figures from the classics return, within the intimate consciousness of these individuals, to reveal something rather less altruistic in how they ambitiously image their own political identities.

Insofar as Classics figures here as being in tension with the social sciences, this period in the 1960s appears as another chapter in the story told so convincingly by Christopher Stray (1998) of the decline of Classics, and especially of Classics at Oxford University, as the standard qualification for entering national politics, or, for that matter, the Civil Service. Literae Humaniores, a four-year degree comprising Classical Moderations ('Mods') and 'Greats', had long been regarded as an almost indispensable cultural qualification for political leadership, but this course was gradually superseded as the established undergraduate education of the nation's leaders by the 'PPE' course in philosophy,

politics and economics. Stray's focus, of course, is on the first part of this narrative. In this account, Literae Humaniores becomes increasingly perceived as merely a cultural ticket to additional social privilege; meanwhile, the course in PPE emerges as an epistemic paradigm that is thought to fit young minds for future rule because economics and political theory are regarded as more organically related to the modern world. Within the cultural mentality of our group of reforming ex-classicists, however, Classics and classical literature will figure, in the account to follow, as much more powerful than a mere vehicle of elevation. As indicated above, classical texts will appear in the main as latently oppressive sources to be confronted and remade, where possible, into resources for a desired future.

The criterion that composes this group of anciently equipped modernizers within Wilson's cabinets, from 1964 to 1970, is that of a classical education. On this score, Crosland, Crossman, Healey, Jay and Stewart all qualify. There will be more to say about the social backgrounds of these individual figures as they are introduced, but for now we shall briefly address their common educational tracks at Oxford, and individual variations. All five had read Classical Moderations at Oxford University, and Crossman, Healey and Jay then described the usual trajectory and read Greats, which also included some modern philosophy. Crosland and Stewart, meanwhile, made a more determined bid for modernity by the relatively new route of following Classical Moderations with Modern Greats, or PPE. Crosland's path here was more complicated, in that, after taking Classical Moderations, he embarked on the Greats course but then, after a year, volunteered for war service. When he returned to Oxford five years later, in 1945, he switched to PPE, which he completed in one year. Only Crossman went on to an academic career centred on the classics, before he became a professional politician and journalist. All did what a classical education at one of the ancient universities was supposed to prepare them to do, which was to assume positions of leadership in their chosen spheres.

There are no signs that this group would have identified itself as a group, given the different alignments of the members with respect to different policies and 'wings' of the Labour Party.[6] Crosland particularly, but also Jay, had been closely associated with Hugh Gaitskell, who had been Wilson's predecessor as Labour leader, although, unlike Wilson, on the right of the party; Healey was also aligned generally with the right, but was more independent of the circle that had formed around Gaitskell. Stewart, meanwhile, though broadly right of centre, was more difficult to place, whereas Crossman had been, like Wilson, part of the circle around Aneurin Bevan, on the left of the party. Nor was this group defined

by any direct mutual communication on classical matters, and so this chapter is directed towards common educational backgrounds and often limited classical references. Our inquiry will now begin in earnest by considering how Classics and the classics themselves figured within the educational and cultural experiences of these individuals, and will then proceed to discuss more directly political applications of their classical knowledge.

Classical backgrounds and hinterlands

Of the five individuals being considered prosopographically here, Denis Healey is the most forthcoming about the impact of his classical education. This fact might be related specifically to Healey having the only provincial background of the five ex-classicists, and more generally to the fact that, like Stewart's, his social background was not especially conducive to a classical education. Healey's grandfather had been a tailor in Ireland before migrating to England, and his father was an engineer and then head of a technical college. His grandfather on his mother's side had been a railway signalman and stationmaster. As a vaguely unlikely classicist, given his background, Healey may have been more motivated to dilate on this phase of his education and the impact of it.

It is his book *My Secret Planet* that expatiates on Healey's relationship with some of the Graeco-Roman classics themselves, not only in the context of his cultural life but also, occasionally, within his political thinking and encounters. Though his formal undergraduate studies at Oxford are represented as vaguely dutiful and quite lightly undertaken, the cultural power of certain classical sources is represented as abiding:

> The Greek language is far more difficult to learn than Latin . . . Yet it is worth the effort of learning Greek for the poetry alone. Poetry depends for its effect so much on sound and rhythm that it is impossible to translate adequately from one language to another . . . I find that Greek poetry is at once the greatest and most untranslatable of all.[7]

Pitched at a potentially broad readership, Healey's version of a literary autobiography realistically acknowledges the formidable difficulties entailed in learning Greek but provides a strong incentive for doing so. This gesture to the reader is culturally democratic, in English prose asserting the difficulty but overriding value of accessing poetry in ancient Greek. The assertion is democratic, too, in that it is not an invitation from one on the inside to those on the outside.

With Greek prose, there is far less difficulty because, as Healey would have it, of the viable alternative of reading prose in translation: 'Greek prose translates well into English. You can enjoy Plato's dialogues in Jowett's translation or Thucydides in Crawley's translation almost as much as in the original Greek'.[8] This chapter on Healey's university education then goes on to extol philosophy as a resource that has served Healey most in his political as well as intellectual life.

Ancient history, meanwhile, is said to provide coordinates that might enlighten potentially everyone, including political leaders, with respect to the present and possible futures: 'In recent years the collapse and disintegration not just of the Soviet Empire but of the whole culture of Communism – a New Civilization, as the Webbs called it – could have come as a surprise only to those who know nothing of Greek history'.[9] Since Greek history furnishes a template, or at least precedents, for the collapse of communism, there is an implication that Greek historiography is recursive enough to comprehend and anticipate the collapse of Greek civilization itself; Ancient Greece, through the words of its own historians, objectively, and plangently, knows and foretells its own end. The displacement of democratic Athens by Philip II of Macedon, or, later, of the Macedonian Empire by Rome, may be the kind of antecedent that, from Healey's perspective, prefigures the demise of communism. In the event, it is that knowledge of historical vicissitude and finitude, imparted to others, such as Healey, in posterity, that ironically guarantees a vivid afterlife to Greek history.

That historical tendency towards the dissolution of civilizations, towards social and political entropy, also applies to Healey's own attachments to history, and particularly to his investment in communism during the febrile 1930s, when political polarization was the norm.[10] From 1937 to 1940, Healey was a member of the British Communist Party at Oxford. Thucydides, again, provides a statement that can limit communist self-representations, capturing here what seems to be Healey's contemporary ambivalence about a similarity between communist and fascist methods: 'neither I nor my comrades could swallow the doctrine of violent revolution, which was fundamental to Marxism-Leninism. Watching the tragedy in Spain I could not forget Thucydides' account of the revolution in Corcyra, which he saw as typical of the ideological conflicts then tearing Greece apart'.[11] Greek historiography projects the end of Greece, of communism, and of Healey's youthful attachment to the latter, and it is this epistemic power which he finds in ancient authors that assures his continued attachment, by contrast, to that historiography.

Like Denis Healey, Michael Stewart extols Greek poetry, within his account of his classical education, in the first chapter of his autobiography (1980).

Stewart also resembled Healey, to some extent, in terms of his background. Though not provincial, Stewart's upbringing was of very modest means, not least because his father died when he was four, necessitating his mother's work as a teacher. These modest means proved an advantage in the one respect that they rendered Stewart eligible for entry to Christ's Hospital in Horsham, which traditionally debarred children of the wealthy. Having entered the school on a scholarship, Stewart later won an open scholarship in classics to St John's College, Oxford. Referring initially to his undergraduate proficiency in classical studies, Stewart quickly qualifies this impression with some self-deprecation and a correspondingly positive claim about the impact that Aeschylus had on him:

> My one difficulty in these studies was the writing of Greek verse. I mastered the technicalities, but Apollo had not breathed on me. 'Jupp' [Stewart's tutor] sighed over one set of verses I presented to him. 'The words', he said, 'must be surprised to find that they scan.' But if I could not write Greek poetry, my appreciation of the real thing was immensely widened by attending Gilbert Murray's lectures on Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy. I was to remember Aeschylus, and the present-day relevance of his teaching, all my life.[12]

In the last sentence, the modal vibration of the verb 'I was to', amplified by the adverbial phrase 'all my life', at the end, seems especially portentous, because it projects a totalizing perspective that is proleptically beyond the present moment of the autobiographical narrator. The ancient poet Aeschylus and his 'present-day relevance' enable the autobiographer to complete his work by affording a future perspective on the autobiographical figure as both past object and as present subject; as both young character and mature narrator, Stewart is seen, by himself and us, from the future. This transcendence certainly cancels the preceding levity in the self-deprecation. Aeschylus, helped by Murray, empowers the autobiography itself. There will appear a more poignant reference to Aeschylus and the *Oresteia* in Stewart's text, when we come to consider the political application of classical sources, beyond Classics itself and Stewart's schooling in the discipline.

For all his interest in the Graeco-Roman classics, Stewart, as already mentioned, proceeded from Classical Mods to PPE, and gives this succinct account of doing so:

> Having taken Moderations, I switched to the course in Philosophy, Politics and Economics which was considered to be the modern equivalent of the old Classical 'Greats'. Now my work chimed in with my political activities

> and I learnt not only in the lecture room and the tutorial, but also from the endless arguments which undergraduates and dons hold with each other.[13]

This trajectory enacts a coming of age, and more, in terms of the several histories invoked. Correlated here is a personal development, a cultural history encompassing the process whereby ancient civilizations are superseded by their modern counterparts, and the intellectual history in which classical studies are eclipsed by the social sciences. These correlations are mediated through the progressive narrative of Stewart's maturation, not unlike Healey's account of the end of his communist affinities. From the cradle of civilization into an adult modernity proceeds the young man, whose academic work and political play come into single focus as he joins the company of his elders on a more equal footing than heretofore. He enters a world of argument. Rather than learning about Athenian participatory democracy, he participates in a current democracy in the making, and requiring, as his life is told in its unfolding, much more work.

Even after Stewart has taken his leave of Classics, he insists on the value of this phase of his education, in one of those reflective passages of auto-biography where the narrator is operating in the present tense of the narration, rather than in 'the past historic' of the narrative. His own past relation with the ancient past is animated in the present, as he reflects on Latin and Greek:

> I have sometimes wondered whether an equal proficiency in French and German would not have served me better, but I cannot bring myself to regret my knowledge of the classics. I dismiss some of the conventional arguments for classical education [. . .]. To my mind, there are two vital truths. First, if one pictures all the knowledge of the Western world – science, politics, literature, etc. – as a great library, there is scarcely a volume in it of which the Greeks did not write the first chapter [. . .]. Second, the fierce and primitive myths of the Greeks, transmuted into great poetry and drama, spell out in the most unforgettable language the constraints and conflicts which condition human life: the conflict between cleverness and wisdom, the competing rôles of justice and mercy in the ordering of society, the extent to which a man may escape from the bonds of heredity and environment.[14]

The word 'escape' at the end here is perhaps the motivating factor in the political modernity that Stewart narrates as having helped to construct. One of those 'constraints and conflicts' from which the 'escape' is effected might be the very

cultural and educational barrier that allows only some to understand 'the most unforgettable language' of Greek, while others cannot. This constraint is only one, of course, among many, but it may serve to represent a larger complex of resources denied to the majority by their socially real situations. Even so, since the Greeks have set the challenge, the actual extent to which the bonds of heredity and environment can be 'escaped' is something the young socialist will want to test potently.

Of all the members of the group configured at the heart of our inquiry, Richard Crossman was by far the most classically equipped. Although his father was a barrister and ultimately a judge, Crossman followed in his path to Winchester College as a scholarship boy, paying his way by that means, and thence to New College, Oxford, with a scholarship in Classics, following his father again. Crossman was elected to a fellowship at New College at the age of twenty-three, specializing in Greek philosophy, particularly Plato. Despite his longer and more immersive experience of the overall discipline of Classics as a young scholar and university teacher, Crossman's extensive writings communicate less of his educational and cultural experiences with the discipline or the Graeco-Roman classics themselves than those of either Healey or Stewart. There are a few moments, such as the episode in his *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, when he describes his reading while holidaying in Cyprus in 1967. The account begins with his eschewing of newspapers:

> Directly I'd arrived in Cyprus I'd decided not to buy one and I found it each day easier and easier to concentrate on reading very slowly the *Antigone* in Greek and rather faster the *Iliad*, and also finishing Elizabeth Longford's enormous book on Queen Victoria and a lengthy novel about life during the crusades.[15]

Heartening though this episode is as an instance of a renewed acquaintance with literary resources, it is evidently an exception in the normal course of Crossman's life. One external source on Crossman's classical education is Tam Dalyell, who remarks on how Crossman's father, having distinguished himself in Mods and Greats, gave his son a head start in Latin, and also on how Crossman attributed his superiority over Dalyell in their common trade as political journalists to his training in Greats.[16] Dalyell, by contrast, had studied history and the distinctly modern subject of economics. Beyond these isolated moments, there is little to register Crossman's classical education as such. The manifestations of that education are another matter, however, as they figure very prominently in his directly political writings, as we shall observe presently.

There is a similar dearth of materials relating to the cultural impact of a classical education on the two remaining members of our group, Douglas Jay and Anthony Crosland.[17] Like Crossman, Jay read Mods and Greats at New College, but then won a fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford and proceeded to school himself in economics, not unlike Crosland. While there is little evidence of their classical backgrounds figuring in the subsequent cultural lives of these two men, their political thinking features more traces of classical coordinates, as we shall now observe in turning to this broad issue within the group.

Political foregrounds and classical presences

Given the broadly shared context of Classics behind this group, how do the Graeco-Roman classics themselves play out within the more directly political discourse of these individuals? Proceeding individually, we may begin with Douglas Jay, whose classical background is otherwise quite opaque. Jay was a contemporary of Crossman at New College and, from 1964 to 1967, served in Wilson's cabinet as president of the Board of Trade. His father was an elected member of the London County Council, and the family was of comfortable means, although a scholarship to New College seems to have been a necessary condition of Jay's attendance there.[18]

Like the other four Labour ex-classicists, Jay was an author. The second paragraph of his first book, *The Socialist Case*, includes this sentence: 'If there is anything about which everybody, plain men and philosophers, ancient and modern, have always agreed, it is that the mental and physical distress involved in acute economic privation is an immeasurable evil'.[19] Once this axiom has been established as such, the third paragraph opens by complicating it: 'Ever since the days of early Greek thought moralists have of course delighted to point out that some poor men are happy and some rich men unhappy'.[20] Having ventilated these converse counter-examples, this paragraph settles on a conclusion:

> But these two human freaks, the happy beggar and the discontented plutocrat need not confuse us. For the vast majority of the human race poverty makes happiness impossible. Indeed, when the argument has been carried to its logical conclusion, it will appear that poverty in the end means nothing else than the absence of certain means to happiness.[21]

The 'argument' here, and 'its logical conclusion', start from an axiom and then establish it, both logically and empirically, as a first principle. The chapter itself is titled 'Poverty, Inequality, Insecurity', and so a principled definition of poverty seems utterly requisite here.

The thrust of Jay's book is known as a socialist response to, and adaptation of, Keynes's ideas, as published in his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, in 1936; these ideas are examined and the emphases within them often modified towards political solutions that are broadly socialist.[22] What is significant for our purposes is that the logical foundations of the project, including the definition of terms and the formulation of first principles, are established with some immediate reference to ancient Greek sources. In one sense, this fact is unsurprising, for the reason that Michael Stewart adduced (see above): the Greeks have written 'the first chapter' of so much knowledge that later first chapters, such as in Jay's *The Socialist Case*, depend on them, conceptually or historically. Invoking Greek antecedents as coordinates in later works is a familiar means, rhetorically as well as logically, of authorizing a novel project. To do so is not only to found the modern on the ancient but also to repeat and thus capitalize on the Greek appetite for the new, as the Greeks wrote those first chapters.[23] Being new is thus part of an august tradition.

The third chapter of Jay's important book on political economy invokes one of the most powerful classical coordinates, which is Plato. It does so as part of an effort to think through philosophically the relations between 'Needs and Happiness', which is the title of this early chapter. This effort is undertaken largely to provide a substantive answer to the question: 'But can we construct a clear and positive meaning for the conceptions of economic action and economic progress?'.[24] Against this effort stands, inter alia, the notion that our individual actions are motivated, even in the most complex instances, by a mere conflict of desires in which the strongest ultimately prevails. Jay challenges this denial of ethical agency and of the will not with his own argument, but with another's:

> But the most convincing argument against it is perhaps the argument from experience, which is as old as Plato. There must be something more than a conflict of desires, Plato maintains, because in the cases when we resist desire (as in the case of a reformed dipsomaniac), the element in us which opposes desire must be something other than desire. For though the same element in us (ie desire) might be attracted to two different things at once, it could not be both attracted and repelled from the same thing. Or, in other words, we

> may desire strawberries and raspberries at once, but if we desire strawberries and decide not to eat them, the faculty that impels us not to eat them must be something other than desire.[25]

The introduction of Plato here is intriguing in that his name is used, along with a footnote drawing attention to Book IV of the *Republic*, as a means of turning the argument from experience into an argument from authority, which should, by rights, be the antithesis of the former argument. Any rhetorical interference in this way with logical methodology is quickly defused, however, as the very next sentence, beyond the quotation, declares that 'These [are]… arguments which everyone must consider and evaluate for himself in the light of reflection on his own experience'.[26] Plato is an authority, but also one that usefully admits of being tested logically. Jay goes further, in asserting that this testing should be undertaken by 'everyone', and, crucially, on the basis of individual experience, as the content of the logical argumentation. A shared, or dialogic, logical method is thus brought into contact with empirical method to produce a logical experience particular to each of us.

There seems to be a significant methodological opening here. Jay invites us by his text into the text of the *Republic* so that we can operate, potentially, in constructing the model that is Plato's Republic. Just for a moment, the emerging outlines of a *socialist* Utopia are suggested by way of the very method recommended for dealing with Plato, and only partly proposed by Plato himself. And such an active method may be necessary, for reasons that Jay implies here: Plato possesses a historical authority, as an ancient source; and he wields a philosophical authority, both because of his powerful logic and because of his rhetorical format of the loaded dialogue, driving ineluctably to his own conclusions. Together, these authorities enable Plato to write, in Stewart's terms, a 'first chapter' of knowledge, which therefore cannot be ignored, and, in the process, to found 'experience' as a logical category, in the 'argument from experience' which is coeval with him.

While Jay's book has recourse to Plato as an early moment in the larger project of engaging Keynes's new ideas to the socialist cause, Crossman confronts Plato extensively in a book that was published in the same year as Jay's: Crossman's *Plato Today* also appeared in 1937. Like the other members of the group of modernizers that we are considering, Jay and Crossman came of age politically and intellectually in the 1930s and during the Second World War. These leading socialist and social democratic thinkers and reformist policymakers of the 1960s were thus incubated in the 1930s. Jay's momentary methodological opening of

Plato's argument from experience appears more significant in the exactly contemporaneous context of Crossman's treatment of Plato.

Crossman's *Plato Today*, a hugely influential book still prescribed for Oxford Philosophical Greats to Edith Hall in 1980, is arranged largely as a series of dramatic encounters between a time-travelling Plato and some interlocutors of the 1930s, who are, in sequence, a British educationalist, a communist, and a Nazi academic. Nobody emerges well from these encounters. Plato is characterized as an inquisitorial figure, with an agenda, interrogating democracy, communism and fascism in turn, and revealing inconvenient common factors among them, specifically because of his virulent critique of democracy. It is Plato's antagonism towards the British political system, in so far as it is democratic, that dramatizes liberal democracy as not the norm, not a historical given, but, rather, as an achievement, especially precarious in the 1930s, which will need to be fought for. In the same moment, the notion that democracy is the least bad of the available political dispensations is revealed in the claim that the democratic tradition already contains, capaciously, discernible elements of the worse ochlocratic ('crowd-governed') alternatives. Those alternatives, in the 1930s, are fascism and communism.

For all the contemporary fragility of democracy, the democratic tradition, in Crossman's account, has a durable quiddity, emanating from classical Athens, because democracy already incorporates, within its very workings, the struggle for power between political ideologies. Yet democracy, or the democratic tradition, is not only the logical whole of such struggles, having internalized them, but is also, in the 1930s, one political part competing with Nazism and Bolshevism within that larger whole. A crucial argument in *Plato Today* is this: were democracy to be overcome, by one or both of the looming competitors, specifically as a *part* of state, society and culture, it would also cease to function as the larger, containing *whole*, which is the democratic tradition. Against this all-too-likely eventuality, Crossman's text proposes a counter-offensive, especially against fascism, whereby British democracy will be required to adopt many of the means characteristic of the opposition: a centrally planned economy geared to war is one such means, as is a political elite, resembling the ruling class in Plato's *Republic*, which will here be tasked with creating and sustaining that economy. A version of Plato today, as a temporary, instrumental evil, will be necessary, in Crossman's view, if democracy is to be saved. *Plato Today* is acutely aware of the ghastly implications of this counter-offensive and proposes powerful safeguards against it, as I have indicated elsewhere.[27]

Like Jay's book, Crossman's text is a world, and a world war, away from the ebullient, transcendently post-war 1960s in Britain. Even so, the presence of Plato, and specifically of the Plato of the *Republic*, persists in Crossman's political thinking. A minor excursus on the Platonic shadow that lingered over his ideas is in order here. Only a year before Labour came to power on a modernizing agenda, Crossman published, in 1963, an edition of Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*, along with an extensive introduction by himself. Magisterially summarizing Bagehot's thesis, Crossman broadly agrees that the Reform Act of 1832 was a vital moment in the secret transmission of power from the monarchy to the representative branches of government, thus crystallizing a concealed distinction between the 'dignified' and the 'efficient' parts of the constitution. Crossman's introduction then seeks to bring Bagehot up to date, in part by referring back to *Plato Today*:

> It has often been observed that when they were plunged into total war in 1940, the British people readily put their democratic constitution into cold storage, and fought under a system of centralised autocracy. The Nazi totalitarian state was defeated because we were ready to accept a more far-reaching totalitarianism. What is not so often noticed is the extent to which the institutions and the behaviour of voluntary totalitarianism have been retained since 1945.[28]

In so far as *Plato Today* itself promoted a self-aware 'freezing' of Britain's democratic constitution for the duration of the war, Crossman's introduction to Bagehot updates his own earlier book as well as Bagehot's work.

In the introduction, Crossman's developing claim is that political power, having passed, in Bagehot's account, from monarchy to parliament and cabinet, is now concentrated in and around the office of prime minister, such that the House of Commons and the cabinet have joined the monarchy and the House of Lords as part of the 'dignified' component of the constitution, all, as in earlier developments, without public knowledge of this transformation. Prime-ministerial government is thus said to remain as virtually the only 'efficient' part of the apparatus in the second half of the twentieth century. This proposition, and others, are strategically tested within Crossman's ministerial experience, as part of a larger intellectual design in which that experience, and the related *Diaries*, are employed as source materials for the book on the British constitution that Crossman intended but did not live to write.[29]

At a crucial juncture in the introduction, having reviewed Bagehot's overall argument, Crossman addresses a series of critical questions to it, starting with

this one: 'First, is Bagehot's analysis – in particular his distinction between the realities and the appearances of British politics – a sound one?'.[30] Crossman ventures two answers. One is that Bagehot is quite accurate. Crossman's second answer is intriguing:

> But there are a number of passages in which he [Bagehot] seems to have quite a different purpose – one not so dissimilar from that of Plato when he wrote the *Republic*.
>
> Plato's primary concern was philosophic. But because he was convinced that Greek civilisation was being destroyed by democracy, he was passionately interested in teaching an *élite* of young aristocrats how to establish a city state immune to its debilitating effects. The *Republic* is a description of how the Guardians of civilisation should be educated [. . .] Their main political characteristic, he tells us, will be a deferential willingness to accept the rule of their superiors. And in order to induce this deference he invents the myth of the 'Noble Lie', which tells the citizens that they were born either of golden, silver, iron or copper parents; and that if the state is not to perish these classes must remain fixed for ever, so that power remains securely in the hands of the golden class of Guardians.[31]

Having proposed this association with Plato, Crossman quickly allows a caveat: 'If anyone had ever asked Bagehot point-blank whether he accepted the doctrine of the Noble Lie, I am pretty sure he would have brushed aside the notion . . . Nevertheless, the Platonic aim is there in the book'.[32] The claim here is that Bagehot was not merely discovering how monarchy, as romantic spectacle, served to consolidate the hierarchy of social class in Britain, but was also endorsing, in line with Edmund Burke, the functioning of this theatrical illusion.

If Crossman had a corresponding political bias in his intellectual project of investigating government, and testing his thesis that prime-ministerial power had become the only efficient part of the constitution, it was that cabinet government should be reasserted and that British prime ministers should become in practice, as they were in theory, *primi inter pares*. There are also numerous other aspects to Crossman's vision of how British democracy might be improved, including developments in parliament which he actually introduced. But, for our purposes, there is a certain continuity to be drawn across Crossman's political writings and work, from his book on Plato in the 1930s, his analysis of the English constitution (via Bagehot) just before Labour took office in 1964, his work as a cabinet minister thereafter, and his *Diaries*,

understood as a source for his intended book on the workings of government. Gliding balefully through this continuity, and provoking numerous critical and creative reflexes in Crossman's thinking and political work, is the spectral presence of Plato's *Republic*. Plato insists on a continuing dialogue with Dick Crossman. We shall have cause, in the conclusion of this chapter, to revisit this case of the revenant.

As observed earlier, for all his expansive eloquence on the impact of Classics, especially via 'Greats', upon his habits of mind, Denis Healey's reference to matters or figures classical in the course of his political work and career is limited. Such references are chiefly confined to tags that he attaches to other political figures, such as the following accolade bestowed on the Conservative Enoch Powell, perhaps as a kind of knowing compliment to another adept former classicist, across the party political divide:

> I think the greatest parliamentary speech I ever heard was by Enoch Powell in 1959, castigating the Macmillan Government over the murder of African prisoners at Hola camp in Kenya; it had all the moral passion and rhetorical force of Demosthenes.[33]

Like Healey, Powell was an ex-classicist of distinction, having edited the text of Thucydides, and derived from a provincial and relatively humble background: his father was headmaster of a primary school, and his mother had been a teacher. Publishing his memoir in 1989, Healey adverts to 1959, almost a decade before Powell's infamous 'rivers of blood' speech, in which Powell claimed that 'like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood'.[34] Since Healey's remark excavates diligently to a Greek rather than a Roman coordinate, and correspondingly identifies an earlier Powell, before his 'rivers of blood' speech against immigration, it perhaps hopes to serve as a partial rehabilitation of the later, divisive figure that Powell became. If he became a dangerous Roman demagogue, he had previously been a noble Greek orator. It took Edith Hall among other classicists, to point out that Powell himself had at least distorted the *Aeneid* in his 'rivers of blood' speech, because the percipient of the bloody Tiber in the Roman epic is actually the priestess of Apollo, who was as Greek as they come. The only Roman is Virgil, and he is concerned not with what he sees but with what the Greek priestess at Delphi sees and reports to the Trojan Aeneas.

Healey's other tags are less controversial, as when he says of Mikhail Gorbachev: 'He has often quoted my favourite saying of Heraclitus: "Everything is in flux" ';[35] and of Nigel Lawson, he states, crushingly: 'He had a raffish insolence

which reminded me sometimes of Steerforth in *David Copperfield*, sometimes of a rather tubby Alcibiades'.[36] There is also a moment when Healey tags himself, as he reflects on his five-year tenure as chancellor of the Exchequer by listing several of 'the Labours of Hercules'.[37] Neither the pun nor the chiasmus is lost: Healey is the Hercules of Labour.[38]

For Michael Stewart, as we have observed, there is a sense in which Aeschylus, and particularly *The Oresteia*, is the alpha and omega of the history that he knows, including his own story, as he writes that larger history into his autobiography. Indeed, the fact that he 'remember[s] Aeschylus and the present-day relevance of his teaching all my life' (11) is presented as an objective, observable condition of the integrity of the autobiographical subject and object.[39] The transcendental perspective opened by that phrase 'all my life' projects a future, as we have seen, from which the young, narrated Stewart and the mature, narrating Stewart can be regarded as one, thanks to Aeschylus' enduring 'teaching'. More empirical evidence of the specifically political force of Aeschylus is given in Stewart's account of some early instalments in the rise of Hitler, specifically in Vienna in 1934, which preceded the German annexation of Austria in 1938. To these events, Stewart recalls applying an interpretive grid that he had learned earlier still:

> I was reminded [. . .] of my other favourite author, Aeschylus, and his description of the Furies, the avengers of blood in Greek mythology. It seemed as if the Furies, aroused by the innocent blood that had been shed in Vienna, were now raging throughout Europe and that all of us – the guilty, the acquiescent, and the indignant – would be equally involved in the expiation.[40]

From Anschluss to Aeschylus, runs Stewart's association.

It is another classical agent of punishment, and another sin, that frames Stewart's autobiography, bookending his written life, via a common reference near the start and the finish. Registering the impact of first reading Tawney's *Acquisitive Society* (1920), Stewart avers:

> It is remarkable how this collection of highly topical lectures of the twenties speaks plainly to us today and warns us of the nemesis which awaits a society in which each individual is encouraged to do the best he can for himself . . . and so far as I belong to any particular school of socialist thought, I am a Tawneian. I had been brought up as a Christian and now came to accept what I understand to be Tawney's view of the relation between Christianity and Socialism.[41]

While the sin of acquisitiveness may be recognizably offensive to both Christianity and socialism, the punishment for it precedes both: 'nemesis'. This overall claim is effectively reformulated as a conclusion on the penultimate page of Stewart's autobiography: 'In my judgment, our present troubles illustrate ever more clearly the Tawneian thesis that capitalist society, based on the principle of individual acquisitiveness, is bound to encounter Nemesis.'[42] The figure of 'Nemesis' has gained an initial capital letter since the earlier expression of this proposition.[43] Accumulating gravity and some anthropomorphism, it can serve as part of the overall conclusion of Stewart's autobiography as the work addresses itself, at the moment of publication, to an audience in Britain just beginning to experience the economic and social effects of Thatcherism. After the hubris of individual acquisitiveness comes the 'Nemesis' of social breakdown.[44] Here is a modernity absolutely unlooked for by any of the five subjects of our inquiry, and it is a modernity to which these ancient coordinates of plot seem regressively and depressingly appropriate. The classics assert themselves here only in their hoary, monolithic power, as ironically, negatively, narrowly adequate to this present.

Against any such present, Anthony Crosland had argued resourcefully in his *The Future of Socialism* (1956). Crosland's background was that of the educated middle class, in London: his father was a senior civil servant, and his mother was a lecturer at Westfield College; Crosland attended Highgate School, and his academic apogee was as a fellow in economics at Trinity College, Oxford, prior to his political career. Among several sources on which Crosland's celebrated book draws prominently is Jay's *The Socialist Case*. Crosland's work is generally regarded as exemplifying the 'revisionist' case against those aspects of Marxist doctrine subsisting within the fabric of British socialism, such as the argument for state ownership of the means of production.

Two strong classical coordinates figure within the expanse of Crosland's text, and both appear in part four of five. One, within a smaller chapter titled 'Some Arguments against Equality', is an acknowledgement of 'the advantages of having slaves', quoted from J. P. Mahaffy's *Social Life in Greece* (1925). The other prominent classical reference is, perhaps inevitably, to Plato's *Republic*, in the context of a chapter concerned with education. Identifying Plato's model of education as utterly removed from his own ideal of comprehensive education, Crosland quotes Crossman's *Plato Today*, as a means of efficiently repudiating Plato's influence:

> Plato's philosophy is the most savage and most profound attack upon Liberal ideas which history can show. It denies every axiom of 'progressive' thought

> and challenges all its fondest ideals. Equality, freedom, self-government – all are condemned as illusions which can only be held by idealists whose sympathies are stronger than their sense.[45]

Crossman's *Plato Today* is, in the event, at least as dialectical as Plato, to the extent that Plato's anti-democratic arguments are accommodated by the book within the very democratic tradition which Crossman is seeking to turbo-charge. This tradition is thus commended by being the only one large enough to contain such contradictions. Crosland, meanwhile, is rather less dialectical than Crossman, and therefore than Plato: *The Future of Socialism* invokes these two classical coordinates of slavery and elite education only to show that they are not coordinates for this work, or, by implication, for modern rational discourse. These references are brought on, quite ceremonially, as coordinates, because they must be, but only in order to be exorcised as coordinates; they are invited in precisely to be defenestrated, in an act of dramatized supersession. Neither Athens' economic institution of slavery nor Plato's critique of many of Athens' other institutions need be terms in the debate. The classical past will have no bearing on *this* future of socialism, at least.

There is one episode in Susan Crosland's acclaimed biography of her deceased husband that suggests he abjured, as means of construing the present, neither the Greek and Roman classics nor his own classical education. In a chapter titled 'Odysseus', the topic is the prime minister, Harold Wilson, and Anthony Crosland's fraught relations with him (Figure 16.1). Susan Crosland, appearing slightly later in the episode as first-person narrator, starts this revealing scene with the direct speech of one of the participants, discussing Wilson:

> 'You were right, Tony. He's nothing more than a shabby tactician.' Two young MPs were having a drink at Lansdowne Road.
>
> 'Oh, I've come round to your earlier view,' Tony replied, instantly recalcitrant. 'I may think one thing, Harold may think another. Harold knows best. Harold is a bastard, but he's a genius. He's like Odysseus. Odysseus was a bastard, but he managed to steer the ship between Scylla and Charybdis.'
>
> When our guests had departed, I asked: 'How much of that did you actually mean?'
>
> 'Don't know. But after all the balls-aching stuff about Harold's great white heat of technology revolution which we used to hear from those young men, I don't intend commiserating with them now. I meant the Odysseus analogy'.[46]

Figure 16.1 Anthony Crosland with Harold Wilson.

The episode of the *Odyssey* that Crosland is invoking here concerns Odysseus' duping of his crew in order to negotiate the adjacent hazards of the six-headed monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis.[47]

There is a fair degree of comedy in this quoted conversation, but the analogy is important, as the fact that it generates the title of the chapter implies. The callow young men are shown finally discovering that the prime minister is devoid of principle, an emptiness at the heart of government. They have seen through the myth of Wilson to the Wizard of Oz behind it. Crosland has other ideas: it was they who were complicit, with others, in mythologizing Wilson in the first place, as a paragon of modernity, applying science, in his 'white heat' speech, to industry. Even as these men now join those, like Crosland, who had earlier demythologized Wilson, by recognizing his emptiness, Crosland remythologizes Wilson, in a parody of his previous mythopoeic apotheosis by others. Parodic as it is, this remythologizing is more literally in contact with myth, since it involves ancient, indeed archaic, Greece. And this recasting as myth trumps the previous mythologizing of Wilson, because it further exposes the false modernity ascribed to Wilson by recognizing in him, not a void, but an old, familiar figure, of Odysseus. Wilson was never new, on the one hand, and he was never empty, on the other, because he is precisely 'Nobody', who has always

been somebody at once specific and shape-shifting. 'Nobody' is, of course, the name that Odysseus gives to himself in order to trick the monstrous Cyclops, Polyphemus, and his shape-shifting is his adaptation, which includes disguise, to the numerous extreme environments in which he finds himself.[48] To 'Nobody's' powerful specificity Polyphemus and the suitors can attest. His shape-shifting, meanwhile, may be read in Susan Crosland's final framing of the episode: the talk between husband and wife after the 'guests had departed' is akin to the discourse of Odysseus and Penelope, in private, when they are reunited at the end of the *Odyssey*, after the suitors have been dispatched.[49] In Susan Crosland's text, Odysseus appears first as Harold Wilson and then as Anthony Crosland, with implications that we shall consider in closing.

All the individuals considered above transcended their classical educations and backgrounds in the obvious sense that none of them made their principal careers as classical scholars or teachers. What they may well have carried forward, apart from a cargo of classical knowledge, is a sense of having been socially levelled by their experience of Oxford: their elite classical education may have levelled them with one another, even though their social backgrounds were often different; and their engagement in politics at the university during the politically pressurized 1930s would have simultaneously placed them in dialogue with communists and progressive activists who were empathetic with the plight of the working class. In transcending Classics, some of the group committed themselves to the more recently evolved social science of economics, notably Crosland, Jay and Stewart; Healey, too, though he occasionally dismisses the dismal science, becomes economically literate as Chancellor of the Exchequer. If anything, economics becomes the lingua franca not only of this group but also of the governing class in the UK, and well beyond. Societies and social problems increasingly become understood in terms of economic rather than political causation, in a long, uneven development starting in the eighteenth century: Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* looks back upon the Roman Empire, but also forwards, in portending the decline of its own model of history as a matter of states gaining and then losing political coherence. The waning of Classical Greats and the waxing of Modern Greats at Oxford, which Stewart and Crosland enact and experience in their changing courses, are symptoms of this larger shift in paradigms of understanding.

Yet confounding, or at least qualifying, this shift is an interpenetration of economic and classical discourses, as those invested actively in the hegemony of economic knowledge recur to classical coordinates, even if momentarily. The writings of Jay, Stewart and Crosland have instantiated just this recurrence.

Crosland's 'Odysseus analogy', however, is set in an exchange of speech which exceeds this pattern of recurrence by revealing something that would be better concealed, because vaguely discreditable, within the overall context of economic discourse geared to altruism and social justice. Odysseus' negotiation between Scylla and Charybdis incorporates a calculation that he does not communicate to the rest of the crew, because it puts them in peril. To avoid Charybdis, and hence the destruction of the ship and the whole crew, Odysseus must sail so far from this danger that six of the crew will be sacrificed to Scylla, into whose range the ship must enter. In this scenario, Odysseus clearly performs a kind of utilitarian calculation of cost and benefit: six dead is better than all dead, and telling nobody about the calculation precludes anybody from reformulating or interfering with it. This economic equation, however, for all its desperate rationality and pragmatism, is set within a kind of 'return of the classical' that reveals indecently more about *the present* than many of the other classical allusions that we have traced. What does it divulge? Perhaps Crosland's lurking ambition to be what Wilson is? Since Crosland, like Wilson, was formerly an academic economist, the analogy, first framed in economic terms, starts the identification between the two men that is then confirmed in Susan Crosland's final framing of the analogy in terms of Penelope and Odysseus discussing it.[50] Between them, the Croslands identify Tony with Harold by identifying both men with Odysseus. As well as pointing backwards historically, the classical analogy gestures forwards to disclose the extent of Anthony Crosland's own political ambition, to replace Wilson as prime minister.[51] The *real* Odysseus is coming home.

Are these five political modernizers conditioned by their classical educations and backgrounds? My argument has been that, indeed, they are. Even as they all leave behind the discipline of Classics in the 1930s and accede to political power in the 1960s, they are compelled to confront some of the classics themselves, as potentially oppressive sources, driving an unsatisfactory present, and to transform these classics dynamically into *re*sources for the desired future. My conclusion, meanwhile, has gone beyond this purposive capitalizing by these men on their classical inheritance: there are some signs that the classics, especially on the Greek side, return inconveniently as a version of the repressed, speaking the minister rather than being fully spoken by him. Crossman's sinister reading of Plato in Bagehot and Crosland's reading of Odysseus in Wilson reveal more than they decorously should: Crossman obsesses still over Plato, in discerning Plato shadowing Bagehot, and Crosland's ambition of kingship glints through the equation of Wilson and Odysseus. Albeit heavily mediated, and ostensibly rejected, philosopher-kings abound.[52] What price democratic socialism?

But these critical revelations are limited in terms of cultural scrutability, unfortunately. The classical figures that lurk so deep within the subjectivity of these twentieth-century political figures might not reliably address the natural constituency of the contemporary Labour Party. This same mythical figure of Odysseus that makes sense of Wilson and Crosland, and brings them together within the party, even if competitively, may divide them from the majority of the party's supporters, who might well not be able to share in such a Homeric epic simile. Only those with some classical acquaintance would get it, if they heard it. Yet this classical heritage is also divided from itself, as we have noted. After the classical curriculum is transcended in the experience of these modernizers, and the classics themselves are confronted, exploited, possibly ignored, and certainly ejected in Crosland's encounter with Plato, as conducive or not conducive to modernizing purposes, some elements come back unbidden, round the edges of all this discipline. The blueprint for the New Jerusalem may thereby contain elements of classical Athens, and be similarly contradictory and unstable. Were such classical allusions and presences really divisive items within the tense comradeship of the Labour Party, importing a pernicious cultural hierarchy into its otherwise egalitarian landscape? Perhaps Odysseus, in his radical shape-shifting, encapsulates the social essence not only of the upwardly mobile Harold Wilson, the crafty prime minister with the provincial, Yorkshire accent, but also of the real inhabitants of the future of socialism: the 'nobodies' who, in everybody's interests, should never be underestimated.

Notes

Chapter 1

1 Stray 1998; Vasunia 2009a; 2009b.
2 Hall and Vasunia 2010; Hall, Alston and McConnell 2011; Wyles and Hall forthcoming, 2016.
3 Revised edition: Thompson 1968.
4 On Dissenting academies see http://www.english.qmul.ac.uk/drwilliams/academies.html (accessed 30 January 2015) and Rivers, Wykes and Burden, eds, *A History of the Dissenting Academies in the British Isles, 1660–1860* (forthcoming, Cambridge University Press), especially the chapter by Penelope Wilson on classical languages and literature in the academies.
5 Especially Giddens 1981.
6 These ideas were developed across Weber's *oeuvre*, but especially in *Economy and Society*, first published in German in 1922 and not in complete English-language translation until Weber 1968.
7 Marx and Engels 1970: 300.
8 On which see Newton 1974.
9 Vautró 1828.
10 See, for a succinct account of parliamentary reform in Britain until 1832, Cannon 1972.
11 Anon. 1782 (political handbill).
12 Gerrald 1794: 188–9. See Hall and Macintosh 2005: 224–8.
13 Dillard 1978. On the swiftly evolving 'reformist' sensibility of the 1830s and this tumultuous decade's aftermath, see Llewellyn 1972 and Brantlinger 1977.
14 The best introduction to Owen's life and ideas remains Morton 1962.
15 Yalem 1963: 36.
16 Thorpe 1996: 84.
17 Matlack 1849: 15–20; see Davis 1962.
18 Dinwiddy 1992.
19 Marks, Mbaye and Kim 2009.
20 The treatise was not published until 1920. On Shelley's suggestions for financial reform, see Cameron 1943.
21 For an excellent refutation of this conventional view, see Morrison 2011, who argues that the Act resulted, rather, from a long process of state reform that had gradually reduced the power of the monarchy.
22 Goldstein 1984: 610.
23 Hewitt 1991.
24 Quoted from Dronsfield 1872: 46–7.

25 See Hall and Wyles 2015.
26 e.g. Besant and Rice 1876.
27 Hobson 1849.
28 Cannadine 1984: 133.
29 Le Corbusier 1986: 289.
30 Hall and Stead, forthcoming.
31 Berger 1972: 33.
32 Bob Dylan (1963) *Talkin' World War III Blues*.

Chapter 2

1 Ann Yearsley (1753–1806) was known as the Milkwoman of Clifton. She encountered Homer through the poetry of Pope.
2 The event inspired the conversion to the suffrage movement of the classicist and translator Anna Swanwick (Hardwick 2000: 191).
3 See for example, Fiske 2008.
4 In addition to Eliot's novel *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), one of the results was to embed Renaissance humanism and its perspectives on Greece into novels such as *Romola* (1862–3). She also wielded editorial power (e.g. in her capacity as assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, from 1851).
5 Vasunia 2013: 335ff.
6 Goldhill 2011: 157.
7 An alternative focus could have been on 'area' or 'national' studies, such as the role of classical material in the cultural politics associated with the 'Democratic Intellect' in Scotland (Davie 1961), or in the development of Irish nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (McElduff 2006: 180–91; Stanford 1976).
8 Stray 1998; 2007.
9 Fiske 2008: 8.
10 Bellamy et al. 2000. See discussion, for example, of the poet and translator Augusta Webster who learnt Greek 'to help a brother' in Hardwick 2000.
11 O'Day 2000: 100–2. See further Hall in this volume on women in the Independent Labour Party. Louisa Hubbard founded the Bishop Otter Teacher Training College at Chichester in 1873 to prepare 'ladies' for careers in elementary teaching. There is some evidence, especially for Ireland, that once women could participate in education at university level, this had a radicalizing effect, including on women from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Foster 2014: 65). However, there is little evidence that engagement with classical material was crucial in this.
12 McElduff 2006. Hedge schools were rural educational establishments attended by children from non-Anglican families in Ireland, when formal schooling for Catholics and Protestant dissenters was prohibited under the Penal Laws (c. 1702–1832).
13 McElduff 2006: 182–3.
14 Brian Friel's play *Translations* explores some of the historical and cultural implications of the hedge schools and the role of classical languages in Irish

political consciousness, covering both knowledge of classical authors and composing for everyday use, often called 'bog Latin' (Friel 1981, discussed by Hardwick 2013: 172–93). In his poem 'Bann Valley Eclogue', Seamus Heaney refers to 'my hedge-schoolmaster Virgil' (Heaney 2001).

15 The association between Latin and Catholicism seemed subversive to the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendency, but in other contexts religious authority could exert a conservative influence, both on the choice of texts and on their associations (cf. Seamus Heaney's choice of Greek rather than Latin intertexts for his more radical work).

16 Quoted in McElduff 2006: 184. See also Hardwick 2000: 83.

17 R. F. Foster has pointed out that in early twentieth-century Ireland the list of National Schools where Irish was taught provides an index of subsequent revolutionary activity (Foster 2014: 58). There is no similar evidence for the effect of the teaching of classical subjects at that stage, but before the establishment of the National Schools Classics co-existed with Irish in the hedge schools, and this is perhaps one reason why classical languages could be regarded as subversive if access to them extended outside the elite. While radicalization of the Irish elite often seems to have taken place at exclusive boarding schools with classical curricula, including those in England, it usually took a nationalist rather than a class trajectory (Foster 2014: 71).

18 Foster 2014: 18.

19 Rose 2001.

20 Rose 2001: 142–5.

21 Rose 2001: 61.

22 Rose 2001: 141. Williams said that he got most pleasure out of a page of Ovid and referred to his disgust for the 'tack' of the moderns (Rose 2001: 141). Presumably he was referring to the original text of Ovid rather than its bowdlerization in the translation published by Buhn.

23 Rose 2001: 136. Rose documents the example of T. A. Jackson (b. 1879), whose Board teachers enabled him to pursue his later career as a Marxist philosopher. However, when they introduced him to Greek mythology 'they gave me no notion at the time of any such thing as a revolutionary philosophy. Rather the reverse since they left only the conservative impression that the universe was so structured that it could not by any contrivance be altered' (Rose, 2001: 161).

24 *The Labourer* emphasized that its aim was 'the redemption of the working classes from their thraldom' (Preface, *Labourer* 1, 1847). There is also evidence of literature/politics overlaps and tensions in nationalist political culture in Ireland in the later nineteenth century (Foster 2014: 61).

25 Rose 2001: 36.

26 Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* (1859) had grown out of lectures given to a mutual improvement society in Leeds in 1845. It sold a quarter of a million copies, was translated into many European and Asian languages, and became the most popular book in the prison library at Wormwood Scrubs. Smiles later admitted he wished he had given more attention to altruism rather than individualism (Rose 2001: 68–9).

27 *The Life and Struggles of William Lovett* (1877), quoted in Rose 2001: 37.
28 Some institutions could, however, become a focus for autodidacts. For example, Sean T. O'Kelly, the future president of Ireland, became an assistant at the National Library in Dublin in 1898 at the age of sixteen and was encouraged to attend evening courses at the Royal Dublin Society by the legendary librarian Thomas Lyster (Foster 2014: 69–70).
29 Mezirow 1981: 125.
30 Freire 1983: 281.
31 Johnson 1983. According to her biographer, her niece Mary Bruce, the classical scholar, translator and liberal promoter of education for women and the working classes, Anna Swanwick, actively promoted evening classes for young men in order to divert them from both hooliganism and Chartist excesses (Bruce 1903).
32 ECC 37: 145, quoted in Johnson 1983: 23.
33 Hall and Macintosh 2005: viii.
34 Fischer-Lichte 2010.
35 There were also resonances with Gibbon's representation of Celtic resistance in his *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–88).
36 Reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1776, 46: 427.
37 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 184.
38 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 383.
39 See Richardson in this volume on Robert Brough's classical burlesque.
40 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 350–1.
41 In the 1850s over 60,000 people are thought to have attended London venues on Boxing Day evenings (evidence quoted in Hall and Macintosh 2005: 351).
42 Rose 2001: 19.
43 Mitchell 2013: 319–49.
44 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 357, 365; Butler 2013: 301–18.
45 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 355, 351. See further Edith Hall on Charles Dickens's responses to classically themed theatrical entertainments in this volume.
46 Morley 1866: 23, quoted in Hall and Macintosh 2005: 353.
47 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 353, 352.
48 Quoted in Hall and Macintosh 2005: 289.
49 Hall and Macintosh 2005: ch. 11, especially 293ff and 309–11.
50 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 3.
51 For examples of the extent to which working-class people accessed Greek and Roman material, usually in translation, see Rose 2001: ch. 4.
52 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 3, 181.
53 See James and Ravenhill-Johnson in this volume.
54 Joan Bellamy, quoted in Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 6.
55 See Paula James's chapter 'The Classical Women', in Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 119–38.
56 See further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/44/ (accessed 30 January 2015).
57 Crane's adoption of socialism dates only from the mid-1880s, although he began to shift philosophically from the mid-1860s.

58 On the 'marriage of convenience' between Crane's political images and his other commissioned work, which drew heavily on Victorian attitudes to childhood and the family, see Woods 1989: 59–67. For details of Crane's life and association with Ruskin, see Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013, ch. 9, 'Walter Crane'.
59 Plate 2 in Johnston 2013.
60 Johnston 2013: 326.
61 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: Plate 59.
62 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 80.
63 For visual exclusion comparable with the trade union banners' marginalization of women workers, see the Drawing with Watercolour by Henry Singleton, celebrating abolition of the slave trade (c. 1807, British Museum). This shows Britannia, flanked by Charity and Justice, with a bust of William Wilberforce, but no slaves are depicted.
64 Jones's poetry is discussed in A. Hall 2010.
65 Rose 2001: 38.
66 *Cooper's Journal*, 1850.
67 For a detailed study of the poem, see Hall in Hall and Vasunia 2010: 33–49.
68 A. Hall 2010.
69 Eliot 1941: 22.
70 Kendall 2013: xxiv.
71 Adler 2015.
72 Kendall 2013: 221–32.

Chapter 3

1 'With the utmost chearfulness we note . . . that Time, Experience, and Observation, have totally changed the colour of this gentleman's mind, and that the reign of right principle is fully restored.' 'New Periodical Paper by Messers Coleridge, Southey and Others', *The Port Folio* 2 (1809).
2 Coleridge 1817b: ch. 23.
3 Calleo 1966.
4 See in particular Calleo 1966; Gregory 2003; and Edwards 2004.
5 'Beyond being a man of no party, Coleridge was, from first to last, a great classical scholar.' Edwards argues how Coleridge's great debt to seventeenth-century English and Scottish theologico-political writing is mediated via his classicism ('his acquaintance with the discourses of virtue, corruption, liberty and tyranny' was deeper than the 'shallow recursions' of those who took their classical republican writing only at second hand) (Edwards 2004: 3).
6 Edwards 2004: 4.
7 'We must always regret the absence of the third Lay Sermon. The spectacle of the middle-aged Coleridge addressing himself in language understanded of the people would be, to say the least, a curious one' (R. J. White (ed.) Introduction, in Coleridge and White 1972).

8 Hardwick and Harrison 2013: xxi.
9 Butler 1981: 62–3.
10 Butler 1981: 120.
11 For the details of this process, see my edition of the *Biographia* (Roberts, Edinburgh University Press 2014), and especially the Introduction pp. xvii–xxxii.
12 Lucas 1905: 491.
13 *The Times*, 2 July 1816. Quoted in Lapp 1999: 52.
14 Lapp 1999: 52.
15 Dorothy Wordsworth to Catherine Clarkson, 2 March 1817 in Wordsworth and Wordsworth, ed. Selincourt et al. 1969–71, 2: 373.
16 Holmes 1998: 440–1.
17 Coleridge and White 1972: xxxvii.
18 Coleridge 1816: 35.
19 Quoted in Jackson 1970: 280.
20 Coleridge 1816: 43.
21 The standard discussion of how this division worked its way through later nineteenth-century literary and political culture is still DeLaura 1969. DeLaura sees 'Hebrew' and 'Hellene' as dialectically interrelated in the strict sense of that term. My argument in this paper is not that Coleridge treats 'Horace' and 'Heraclitus' as dialectical in this Hegelian sense – although Coleridge did read and annotate Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*.
22 Coleridge 1816: 7.
23 Ibid: 11–12.
24 Ibid: 31.
25 Ibid. 33.
26 Ibid: 32.
27 Ibid: 50–1.
28 Prior 1779, 1: 323 ('Democritus and Heraclitus').
29 White and Southey 1808, 1: 28.
30 Bradick and Furley 1765: xiii.
31 This is William Enfield's translation: Brucker and Enfield 1791, 1: 438.
32 Coleridge 1816: 20.
33 The quotation is from Plutarch's treatise 'On the "E" at Delphi' (= *Moralia* 392B–C), although it seems likely Coleridge found this not in the original but quoted in Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher's article on Heraclitus published in *Museum der Alterthums-Wissenschaft* (1807). The Greek means: 'So it is impossible to step twice into the same river, as Heraclitus says; and it is likewise impossible to apprehend twice any moral substance with any permanency; but rather in abruptness and rapidity it changes, is scattered and later re-assembled, or rather not later, but at the same moment shaped-together and dissolved apart, it comes and it goes, such that whatever is born of it is never able to achieve Being since the process of generation itself is unceasing and ineluctable.'
34 'The Apostle of the Gentiles quoted from a Greek comic poet' – he means the line 'evil communications corrupt good manners' in 1 Cor 15:33; thought to be derived from Menander.

35 Coleridge 1816: 26.
36 Coleridge 1816: 26. Coleridge's 'Multiscience' is Πολυμαθίη in the original – 'much learning' or 'great learning'.
37 This was how Hartley Coleridge published the poem in his *Literary Remains of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (4 vols, 1836–9); J. C. C. Mays, in the *Poetical Works* volumes of the *Collected Coleridge*, prints a different text, derived from the original marginalium, which he dates to 1824 (Coleridge and Mays 2001).
38 Coleridge 1816: 96.
39 This is Heraclitus DK B114.
40 Haynes 2003: 77.
41 Plato's *Cratylus*, and the neoplatonist Simplicius, both summarize Heraclitus beliefs in these terms.
42 To use the numeration from Diels and Kranz's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (6th edn 1952): 'All things come to pass in consonance with this Logos' [DK, B1]; 'the *logos* is universal' [DK, B2]; 'this *logos* always holds although humans continually prove themselves unable to comprehend it' [DK, 22B1].
43 Charles H. Kahn notes that by introducing his proem with a reference to his own *logos* 'Heraclitus is following a literary tradition well established among early prose authors. The oldest surviving parallel is the preamble to a work of Hecataeus (the *Historiai* or *Genealogiai*) which began with these words: 'Hecataeus of Miletus says as follows. I write these things as they seem to me to be true, for the reports (*logoi*) of the Greeks are, in my judgment, many and ridiculous.' The fifth-century treatise of Ion of Chios begins: 'The starting point of my discourse (*logos*): all things are three and nothing more or less than these three. Other examples show that such treatises were regularly introduced by a reference to the *logos* or discourse as such.' He adds, though, that, while 'Heraclitus' *logos* is from one point of view the usual Ionian prose "report"', there are other oddities in his usage, deriving from his simultaneous use of 'the traditional idiom of aphoristic wisdom' (Kahn 2007: 97). T. M. Robinson agrees that *logos* here means 'simply his "account" (of things)' and dismisses the 'Stoic interpretation' that it also meant something like 'rational principle' (Robinson (ed.) 1987: 75).
44 Coleridge, McFarland and Halmi 2002: cix–cx.
45 Heidegger, trans. Rojcewicz and Schuwer 1994: 45.
46 Coleridge 1816: 44.
47 Ibid: 45–6.
48 Coleridge 1816: 13.
49 Hole 1989: 250.

Chapter 4

1 Burke's *Reflections* demanded a swift and strong response from the left, partly because Burke was not a reactionary. As a Whig MP, before defecting to Pitt's government in 1791 he had fought for numerous progressive causes, including

supporting the Irish patriots in the early stages of the American War of Independence.

2 It is difficult to tell at any given time which of the three *Blackwood's* writers is writing under the cover of 'Z'. It is generally understood that Lockhart was the primary author behind 'Z' and therefore of the Cockney attacks, but – as with the editors of the *Anti-Jacobin* – it is to some extent a case of collaborative authorship (Strout 1959: 8–13).

3 Bridges 1797. Bridges's burlesque translation was first printed in 1762. The illustrations were new to the 1797 edition. In 1810 Byron read a copy on a tour of the 'Trojan Plain' (Byron and Moore 1873: 476).

4 King James Version (1611).

5 Shelley, *Mask of Anarchy* 1832 (written in 1819), lines 380–2.

6 On the 'Cockney school' see Cox's groundbreaking study *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School* (1998) and Dart 2012.

7 Keats, *Letter to George and Georgiana Keats* 1 September 1819, in Rollins (ed.) 1958.

8 For the classical education as means of social closure, see Stray in this volume and 1998; 2007.

9 I use the term 'Cockney' frequently in this chapter (henceforth without inverted commas) as an identifier of association with the Hunt circle; it does not mean, as today, someone from East London. Indeed, they were identified most strongly with the area we would now consider North London, around Hampstead Heath. It was an offensive label, and one not used of the Cockneys themselves; but it has, in recent years, been appropriated by scholars as a neutral signifier of this group of reformist writers, artists and thinkers (Cox 1998; Dart 2012; Roe 1997). As Hunt was an aristocrat, the conservative press refrained from placing him in the 'Cockney school' even though he was a central figure. On the *Anti-Jacobin* and the use of classics, see Lessenich 2012 and Stead 2015, chapter 3.

10 One telling example is *Blackwood's* persistent reference to William Hazlitt as the 'pimpled Hazlitt', on which see Strout 1937.

11 'Letter from Z. to Leigh Hunt, King of the Cockneys', *Blackwood's* 3 (14): 196 (May 1818).

12 'At eleven (1806) he [Maginn] entered Trinity College, Dublin, ranking near the top of examinations in Latin and Greek, and taking the premium in Hebrew. [. . .] He was awarded an LLD in 1819, reputedly the youngest to be so honoured. His background and education gave him strong unionist and establishment views' (Latané, *ODNB* 2004). In November 1819 he translated 'Chevy Chase' into Latin (*Blackwood's* 6 (32): 199). Croker was also a distinguished classicist, trained at Trinity College, Dublin, and a contemporary of Thomas Moore, the translator of Anacreon. More on Lockhart to come.

13 *Leigh Hunt's London Journal* 1 (3): 17 (16 April 1834).

14 *Blackwood's* 13 (76): 541 (May 1823).

15 Lockhart attempts at first to enlist Byron as an anti-type to the Cockneys by virtue of his class and education, but his close association with Hunt and his 'school of poetry' could not and cannot be denied.

16 Cox 1998: 51–2.
17 Hunt 1818: 32.
18 For full discussion see Stead 2015, chapter 4 on Leigh Hunt and 5 on John Keats.
19 The 'county lords' they affected to address were more likely reading the *Quarterly Review*. See Klancher 1987: 51–2, where he also notes that a single edition of *Blackwood's* would cost a worker a full day's pay.
20 Wheatley 1992: 6.
21 Cox 1998: 22.
22 Lessenich 2012: 335.
23 *Blackwood's* 2 (7): 38 (October 1817).
24 'One Cornelius Webb Poetaster – who unfortunately was of our party occasionally at Hampstead' (Keats in Rollins (ed.) 1958, 1: 180).
25 Cox 1998: 16–19.
26 'Letter from Sappho the Younger, of Blowbladder Street', *Blackwood's* 10 (57): 477 (November 1821).
27 Moses finished his *Select Greek and Roman Antiquities* in 1817.
28 The lack of interest was, I would argue, in the class connotations of the genesis of the classicizing product, emphatically not the class connotations of what the product represented. Then, as now, people would to varying degrees have been attracted to classical objects – among which I include classicizing art, texts and so on – by the élan and cultural capital (to use Bourdieu's term) their appreciation to appeared to bestow.
29 Levinson 1988: 4. Other examples abound in the (1970s and 1980s) psychoanalytical tradition of literary study, which – although often deeply insightful – invented a Keats with all manner of neuroses, built largely upon an unspoken willingness to agree with the largely fictitious and hugely partisan contemporary criticism.
30 For the reception of the so-called 'Elgin Marbles', see St Clair 1967 and Webb 1982: 220. For fellow Cockney Benjamin Robert Haydon's account of first seeing the marbles in 1808, see Haydon 1998.
31 Sharp 1892: 32.
32 Stead 2015. See also Cox 1998. The heifer lows (at time of writing) in Room 18 of the British Museum as part of the Elgin Collection (GR South Frieze XLIV, 129–31).
33 *Blackwood's* 2 (7): 38 (October 1817).
34 Hunt publicly launched Keats, Shelley and John Hamilton Reynolds in an article entitled YOUNG POETS in the *Examiner*, 1 December 1816.
35 Hunt was at this point a good reader of both Greek and Latin, and was capable of using a French edition of Catullus in his own interactions with that Roman poet, so he also had a working knowledge of that language. He could also most probably read Italian well enough, although he did not travel to Italy till 1822. On Hunt's life, including education, see Roe 2005 and in *ODNB* 2004, and for his use of classical learning in later life, see Stead 2015.
36 The school was well respected at the time for its rigorous classical curriculum. Charles Lamb, as well as Coleridge, was an alumnus of Christ's Hospital. For

his account see *Gentleman's Magazine* (1813) for his essays: 'Recollections of Christ's Hospital' (1813) and 'Christ's Hospital five-and-thirty years ago' (1820). See also Coleridge 1817b, 1: 145–6 – where he praises Bowyer highly.

37 *Blackwood's* 2 (7): 39 (October 1817).

38 *Blackwood's* 5 (25): 97 (April 1819).

39 Asclepius ('god of healing arts') was particularly apt for Lockhart's purpose since – as they knew full well – Keats until recently had been training as an apothecary. The spelling is not a mocking mis-spelling (e.g. 'Oppolo' for Apollo in *Anti-Gallican Monitor*, 8 June 1817, reprinted in Cox 1998: 22 – designed to poke fun at the Cockneys' illiteracy) but a learned variant employed consistently throughout *Blackwood's* of that period.

40 *Blackwood's* 3 (16): 453 (July 1818).

41 *Quarterly Review*, 1818, 18: 324.

42 Byron and Marchand, eds, 1977: 81.

43 *Blackwood's* 3 (17): 519 (August 1818).

44 The word – first coined in this usage in English by Gifford in his *Baviad*, line 310 – ultimately derives from μέτρον ('a poetic foot' and by synecdoche 'poetry') and μᾰνία ('madness', 'obsession'), hence 'a madness for poetry'.

45 He was poor by his choice to live without working on a small living allowance, which gave him ample time for reading and writing. See Roe 2012: 3–195.

46 *Blackwood's* 3 (17): 521 (August 1818).

47 *Blackwood's* 3 (17): 522 (August 1818).

48 For discussion of critical techniques employed by *Blackwood's* reviewers see De Montluzin 1998; Wheatley 1992; 2013; Cox 1998: 16–37.

49 *Blackwood's* 3 (17): 522 (August 1818).

50 Smith 1984: x.

51 *Blackwood's* 6 (31): 73 (October 1819).

52 On tea and tea-drinking see Ellis 2010.

53 *Blackwood's* 6 (31): 72 (October 1819).

54 Hunt 1818: 18–19.

55 Translation Guy Lee 1994, with minor disruption in squared brackets for clarity.

56 'It is pleasing to walk through the air itself and live strolling in the immense sky.' How we translate *spatiens* considerably alters the import and tone of the lines. As well as 'strolling' (i.e. taking a walk), it can more obliquely refer to the action of 'spreading out'.

57 *Blackwood's* 6 (31): 72 (October 1819).

58 *Blackwood's* 6 (31): 70 (October 1819). 'Confusion worse confounded' is from Milton's *Paradise Lost* ii. 996.

59 Hunt 1818: 31.

60 Lochhead 1954: 11.

61 *Blackwood's* 6 (31): 74 (October 1819).

62 For the concept of originality and Romanticism see Saunders 2012: 65–86.

63 [Croker] *Quarterly Review*, 1818, 19: 204–8 – quoted by Lessenich 2012: 341.

64 Hunt 1818: 23.

65 *Edinburgh Review* August 1820, reproduced in Schwartz 1973: 177.

66 Hunt 1818: 18.
67 *Literary Journal* 1819: 192 (20 March) reproduced in Schwartz 1973: 152–5.
68 Hunt 1818: 34. For a full account of Hunt's interaction with Catullus, see Stead 2015.
69 Hunt 1818: 33.
70 Hunt 1818: 11.

Chapter 5

1 Brough 1855: 9. Hall's account (Hall 1999) of Brough and his highly political engagements with the ancient world has in many ways been instrumental to the shaping of this chapter.
2 Brough 1855: 95.
3 See Hawtrey 1868 for an account of one exception – St Mark's school, founded in 'an attempt to give a liberal [classical] education to children of the working classes'.
4 This was Brough's favourite term for the contemporary elite. See Brough 1855, *passim*.
5 Brough 1855: 102.
6 Brough 1860: vi–vii (posthumous Memoir of the Author, by George Augustus Sala).
7 *New York Times*, 18 August 1860.
8 *Musical World*, 13 October 1860: 657.
9 Quoted in Friswell 1906: 27.
10 For Brough and Hannay, and the Robert Brough–Bob Marston identification, see Espinasse 1893: 324–5.
11 *The Cornhill Magazine*, XI: 2 (February 1865): 252–3.
12 Brough 1858b: xiii.
13 *The Saturday Review*, 10 July 1858: 42.
14 *The Saturday Review*, 18 June 1859: 749.
15 *The Saturday Review*, 10 July 1858: 42. For Brough and *The Saturday Review*, see Cross 1988: 98.
16 *The Times*, 15 July 1856: 12.
17 See *The Welcome Guest, A Magazine of Recreative Reading for All* (London), Vol. 1 (1860): 239–40.
18 Yates 1894: 60.
19 Ibid.
20 *The Draper and Clothier*, vol. 2 (1860): 72.
21 Friswell 1906: 28–9.
22 Yates 1885: 215.
23 Brough 1855: 60–2.
24 See Thirlwall 1936: 42: 'Before Niebuhr's researches the legends preserved by Livy, Polybius and Plutarch fell like ninepins, amid the wails of lovers of dear, dead things.'
25 Niebuhr 1828.
26 Before attacking Niebuhr in translation, the '*Quarterly Review* had published Dr. Arnold's highly favourable review of the German original, apparently in blissful ignorance of its contents, in June, 1825' (Thirlwall 1936: 43–4).
27 *The Quarterly Review*, January 1829: 8.

28 See Thirlwall 1936: 43: 'The translators, in their effort to be painfully exact, failed to straighten many of Niebuhr's torturous passages. Macaulay, for one, desired a translation of the translation.'
29 This is, indeed, the account of Brough which I have previously given (Richardson 2013); this chapter aims to complicate that picture.
30 *The Draper and Clothier*, vol. 2 (1860): 72.
31 See Richardson 2013.
32 *The Times*, 12 December 1854: 9.
33 Quoted in Brough 1855: 87.
34 Ibid: xi. The Preface is dated 27 June 1855. In later editions, the following footnote was appended to this passage: 'This had reference to the War in the Crimea.'
35 Ibid: 67.
36 Sachs remarks that 'Hazlitt even suggested that Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* could be a more effective vehicle for political debate than works by Burke or Paine' (Sachs 2010: 181). On Coriolanus in politics see further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/100/ and http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/6/ (both accessed 30 January 2015).
37 Brough 1855: 60–2.
38 Friswell 1906: 29.
39 Brough 1855: 89.
40 *Daily News*, 24 August 1855: 2.
41 *Olympus in a Muddle* was never published, and the manuscript is unsigned – however, it is attributed to 'the Brothers Brough' in *The Morning Chronicle*, 24 August 1855: 2.
42 *Daily News*, 24 August 1855: 2.
43 *The York Herald*, 16 June 1855: 7.
44 Brough, R. B. and Brough, W. 1855: 23–5.
45 *The Bradford Observer*, 16 August 1855: 4.
46 Brough, R. B. and Brough, W. 1855: 31.
47 Lord Chamberlain's office Day Books, 1852–65, British Library Add MS 53703: 213.
48 *The Racing Times*, 28 August 1855.
49 *Daily News*, 24 August 1855: 2.
50 *Theatrical Journal*, 20 August 1855: 275.
51 Brough 1855: ix–x.
52 Yates 1885: 216.
53 *Daily News*, 24 August 1855: 2.
54 *The Morning Chronicle* 24 August 1855: 4.
55 Miles (ed.) 1897: 300–1.
56 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 413; see also Hall 1997.
57 Brough 1856a: 11.
58 *The Times*, 15 July 1856: 12.
59 *Illustrated London News*, 19 July 1856: 65.
60 See Hall and Macintosh 2005.
61 Brough 1856a: 9: 'JASON: I was to blame and that's the truth, / I'm not ashamed to own it. [. . .] / One night in secret I "vamoosed," / And the old girl left behind me.'

62 Ibid: 22–3.
63 See Trollope 1859, vol. 2: 94 (Chapter XXXIII): 'Medea, when she describes the customs of her native country (I am quoting from Robson's edition), assures her astonished auditor that in her land captives, when taken, are eaten.'
64 Sala 1864: 24.
65 *Illustrated London News*, 19 July 1856: 65.
66 Sala 1864: 25.
67 *The Times*, 15 July 1856: 12.
68 'Medea, or, The Best of Mothers with a Brute of a Husband', burlesque in one act by R. B. Brough. British Library Add MS 52960 K: 31. The entire page is crossed through in the manuscript.
69 'I have done for this man, / All that tenderness can, / I have followed him half the world through, sir' (Brough 1856a: 24).
70 British Library Add MS 52960 K: 48. The first line is crossed through, in the manuscript, with the second one written in around it.
71 Brough 1856a: 35.
72 Ibid: 34.
73 Lord Chamberlain's office Day Books, 1852–65. British Library Add MS 53703: 185. The British Library catalogue for Add MS 52960 K suggests that some cuts were demanded – but this is in fact mistaken; the Day Books note cuts made to Mark Lemon's competing burlesque of *Medea*.
74 Sala 1864: 32.
75 Sands 1979: 55.
76 Ibid: 83.
77 Ibid: 73.
78 *Every Saturday. A Journal of Curious Reading*, Vol. 1, 3 November 1866: 535.
79 See *The Odd-Fellows' Magazine*, II: xvi (October 1860): 459. Brough's acid candour did not help his cause. He caricatured, for instance, William Hepworth Dixon, editor of the *Athenaeum*, as 'the flea', who secured his post through ingratiation: the elite, 'finding that the creature could eat toads, fed him bounteously' (Brough 1860: 240).
80 Friswell 1906: 28.
81 Brough 1860: vii (Sala's Memoir).
82 Ibid: 351.
83 Sala (ed. McKenzie) 1993: 41. Letter dated Tuesday 27 March 1860.
84 Ibid: 83 (original emphasis). Letter dated Friday 4 May 1860.
85 *Illustrated London News*, 25 June 1859.
86 *Musical World*, 7 July 1860: 428–9.
87 *The Times*, 29 June 1860: 11.
88 Sala 1864: 56.
89 Annotated copy of Robert Brough, *Medea; or The Best of Mothers with a Brute of a Husband* (London, Lacey's Acting Edition of Plays), private collection.
90 See Ibid: 16.
91 See Garde 2007: 223.
92 Sala 1864: 29.

93 *The Welcome Guest, A Magazine of Recreative Reading for All* (London, Houlston and Wright), Vol. 1 (1860): 211.
94 Brough and Bennett 1860: 109.
95 Ibid: 34.
96 Burnand 1866: 5–6. On Burnand see also Hardwick in this volume, above pp. 32.
97 *The Times*, 15 July 1856: 12.
98 See Brough 1860: vi (Sala's Memoir): 'He never looked well. Each successive time I saw him until a few weeks since he was in some degree or manner worse.'
99 *The Odd-Fellows' Magazine*, II: xvi (October 1860): 457.
100 *New York Times*, 18 August 1860.
101 *The Welcome Guest, A Magazine of Recreative Reading for All* (London, Houlston and Wright), Vol. 2 (1861): 370.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Brough 1856b: 65.

Chapter 6

1 Article reproduced in Marx and Engels 1975–2005, vol. 13: 664.
2 Diniejko 2009.
3 Letter dated 6 September 1858; see Marlow 1994: 132.
4 Kettle 1963.
5 Hall 2011a; Hunnings 2007; Hall and Wyles 2015.
6 Dickens 1854: 170.
7 Thackeray 1903: 272, 276.
8 Dickens 1848: 448.
9 Chesterton 1906: 179.
10 Jenkyns 1980: 137.
11 Hobsbaum 1972: 10.
12 On e.g. Eliot and the Classics see Easterling 1991; on ethical uses of Greek tragedy in fiction see Hall 2009; on *The Last Days of Pompeii* see Hunnings 2011.
13 Slater 1996: 17.
14 Dickens 1965–2002, vol. 7: 171, to Macready, 8 August 1856.
15 See his remarks in Slater 1996: 158–9: 'a remarkable illustration of what a man of genius may do with a common-enough theme, and how what he does will remain a thing apart from all imitation.'
16 Hall and Macintosh 2005: chapter 12.
17 On Dickens and the Foundling Hospital see especially Taylor 2001. On the impact made by the Foundling Hospital on earlier, eighteenth-century culture, with which Dickens is likely to have been familiar, see Hall and Macintosh 2005: chapter 5.
18 Letter of 30 August 1837, in House and Storey 1982: 299.
19 Hall and Macintosh 2005: chapter 11.
20 House and Storey 1982: 355–6.

21 House and Storey 1982: 478 n. 1; see also Ackroyd 1990: 117.
22 On Dickens and Shakespeare see Gager 1996 and the brilliant article by Poole 2011.
23 van Amerongen 1926: 72.
24 Fletcher 1998.
25 Dickens 1844: 53.
26 Dickens 1865: 13.
27 Dickens 1854: 53.
28 Dickens 1850: 144.
29 Dickens 1850: 169.
30 Allen 1988: 65–6, 109.
31 Matchett 1911; Allen 1988: 104–5.
32 Compare Dickens 1851: 51: the Latin master 'took great pains when he saw intelligence and a desire to learn'.
33 See especially Litvack 1999.
34 Dickens 1957: 366–433.
35 Dickens 1863; see further Hall 2011.
36 Dickens 1957: 38–9, 320, 366–7, 411, 413–14, 417.
37 Dickens 1865: 55–6.
38 Wilson 1970: 62.
39 See van Amerongen 1926: 47.
40 See Manning 1959.
41 Dickens 1850: 5–7 and Dickens 1869: 240.
42 Dickens 1851: 49.
43 Dickens 1851: 52.
44 Dickens 1848: 23.
45 Morris 1991.
46 Hori 2004: 37.
47 Thomson 1904: 72. My emphasis.
48 Speech delivered at a banquet held in his honour at Edinburgh, 25 June 1841, quoted from Dickens 1869: 3.
49 Dickens 1880, vol. 1: 87.
50 Dickens 1957: 433.
51 Fletcher 1988: 22.
52 *Make it New* was the title of Pound's influential essay collection/manifesto of 1935.
53 Letter from Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts of 18 March 1856, quoted and discussed in Ormond 1984: 258.
54 Lettis 1990.
55 Lettis 1990: 29, 79.
56 Clark 1918.
57 Ford 1955: 113.
58 Trollope 1883: 200.
59 Aytoun 1846, quoted from Collins 1971: 210.
60 Horne 1844: 40, quoted from Collins 1971: 201.

61 Sørensen 1985: 12.
62 Sørensen 1985.
63 Sørensen 1985: 74–5.
64 Dickens 1848: 54.
65 Dickens 1865: 66. On Dickens and the language of journalism see especially the anonymous article in the *Saturday Review* for 1858, quoted in Collins 1971: 385: 'Mr Dickens' writings are the apotheosis of what has been called newspaper English. He makes points everywhere, gives unfamiliar names to the commonest objects, and lavishes a marvellous quantity of language on the most ordinary incidents.'
66 I am deeply indebted to Sørensen 1985 in my comments on Dickens's style, and especially in the examples of innovative practice.
67 Dickens 1865: 48.
68 Dickens 1850: 286.
69 Dickens 1848: 137.
70 Paraphrase of cummings's reported view in Grant 2012: 121.
71 Gissing 1925: 151–3.

Chapter 7

1 A proposed 'return to Classics' formed part of the tumultuous reign of Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education: see e.g. M. Jupp, 'Carpe diem, Mr Gove', *The Guardian*, 4 February 2014.
2 Gerth and Mills 1946: 280.
3 For an accessible discussion of the issues, see Parker et al. 2003.
4 Murphy 1988: 15, 23.
5 The subsequent lives of the five boys were in one way contrary to what one might expect. Of the two Harrow boys, one died the year after the photo was taken, of diphtheria in India, aged sixteen; the other aged sixty, in an asylum. The three working-class boys all married, had children and lived into their eighties. See Jack 2010.
6 Honey 1977: 104–16; Gathorne-Hardy 1977: 144–80.
7 Honey 1977: 240–1.
8 Various dates have been given at both ends, probably because those for plain and milk chocolate differ.
9 'Locksley Hall', 1837–8. One might suspect that 'beacons' should read 'beckons'; but the verb 'to beacon' was in use in the mid-nineteenth century, though not for long.
10 In a later poem, 'Locksley Hall sixty years after', the speaker declares, 'Wreck'd – your train – or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!'
11 Sharp, Roberts and Co., a Manchester firm founded in 1828 who manufactured locomotives from 1833. Their rivals included the Vulcan foundry, whose first locomotive was also made in 1833.

12 A bank founded in 1852 in France with the support of Louis Napoleon.
13 Marx 1993 [1857–8]: 111. The best-known railway station in the history of Marxism is the Finland Station in St Petersburg, where Lenin arrived in 1917 to start the October Revolution; hence the title of Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History* (1940). The Finland Station was a terminus, but did not mark the end of Lenin's revolutionary journey.
14 See further Hall 2011c.
15 Harris and Stray 2003.
16 At Heidelberg he was taught Roman law by Immanuel Becker – not to be confused with Immanuel Bekker of Berlin, whose lectures Marx had attended.
17 Weber 1975: 114. On Weber and Mommsen, see Mueller 1986.
18 One of his best friends there was the historian of the Hellenistic world Maurice Holleaux, a contributor to the first edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History*.
19 Durkheim 1892: French transl. 1953, English transl. 1960. The Latin original of 1892 was translated into French in 1937 and into English in 1960. See Lukes 1973: 562.
20 Lukes 1973: 58–63; Fournier 2013: 35–6.
21 'Marx and Weber are not always as theoretically estranged from one another as their respective adherents often wish to assert. Both were products of German liberal society . . . and its cultural heritage from . . . the eighteenth century's classically oriented humanism' (Morrall 1983: 312).
22 Hobsbawm 1983: 295–6.
23 Bamford 1967; Honey 1977.
24 Burstow and Whittaker 1957: 5, quoted in Bamford 1967: 25.
25 Bamford 1967: 199–203.
26 Montgomery 1965, Roach 1971.
27 Gladstone saw the reforms as a way of continuing the influence of the upper classes: as he remarked to Lord John Russell, 'the aristocracy of this country are even superior in natural gifts, on average, to the mass' (letter to Lord John Russell, quoted in Bebbington 1993: 86).
28 Vasunia 2009b.
29 Furse 1962: 233–44. In the same period, Harvard, Princeton and Yale were manoeuvring to block or control the entry of blacks, women and Jews: a story very well told by Jerome Karabel in his book *The Chosen* (2005).
30 This was also, be it noted, the high noon of the ideological glorifying of the Empire, which took off in the mid-1880s with Victoria's *durbar*; see Cohn 1983.
31 Coltman 2006.
32 See the excellent survey in Pemble 1987.
33 Miller 1973: 71.
34 Ibid: 107.
35 Miller 1973: 139. The official title of Ellis and his predecessors was 'principal librarian', to which 'director' was prefixed from 1898.
36 Edwards 1823: 46.
37 Anon. 1824: probably J. H. Monk of Trinity College.
38 Stray 1991; Howatt and Smith 2000.

39 Beard 1852: 69. See further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/70/ (accessed 30 January 2015).
40 Lockhart 1827: 149. This is quoted as a 'Tory growl' by Rose 2001: 21 (where for '1826' read '1827', and for 'anabases', 'anabaseis'). Papier mâché does not here refer to stereotype printing plates, which were made of plaster; papier mâché was used only from *c.*1848.
41 Stray forthcoming.
42 The author of the abridgement also produced an even smaller and cheaper book, though it did not sell. A delinquent who went on to become a burglar enjoyed reading about middle-class boys who attended ancient academies, where they threw Liddell and Scott's lexicons at each other: these were surely the abridged editions. See the unindexed reference at Rose 2001: 328. Glimpses of images, if not the reality, of public-school life could be gained from school stories, from Tom Brown to Billy Bunter to Nigel Molesworth: ibid 322–31.
43 The number of voters was doubled by the 1867 Reform Act.
44 Thirlwall to Bunsen, 10 October 1833: Trinity College Library, Cambridge, O. 15. 44.1.
45 Davie 1961.
46 Anderson 1983; Morris 2009.
47 Copleston 1810: 157.
48 Ibid: 106.
49 See Hall's chapter on women in the Independent Labour Party in this volume.
50 Stray 1998: 202–32.
51 Two of the fourteen members of the Committee were women, but throughout the report children are referred to, where gender is specified, as male, except in the chapter on domestic subjects.
52 McCulloch 2007.
53 On his retirement in 1954, Barrow joined the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* team, and continued a member till the publication of its final fascicle in 1982, when he was nearly ninety.
54 Stray 1998: 273–4.
55 See the comments in the standard English edition of the *Laws*, by E. B. England (2 vols, Manchester 1921) ad loc. England's second name was Bourdieu, but, as far as I know, he was not related to the French sociologist of that name.
56 The Report's title page is reproduced as the frontispiece of McCulloch 1991, but the Platonic quotation is not discussed in McCulloch's text.
57 Its last gasp can perhaps be seen in Livingstone's *Plato and Modern Education* (1944). See in general Stapleton 2007.
58 Jackson and Marsden 1962: 153.
59 See Harrison 1998: 9.
60 It is a nice touch that the table built for playing is the site of the duty that keeps him from play.
61 Stray 1998: 280.
62 cf. Murphy 1988: 16–42.
63 Its first teacher was Marx's friend Charles Waldstein, mentioned above.

64 Stray 1998: 286.
65 The book was published by Hachette in 1864; in 1900 it reached a seventeenth edition. It was translated into English (by the American sociologist Willard Small) in 1873 and into German in 1907. For the context of its rejection by Oxford University Press, see Stray 2013. The Press did, however, accept translations for use in teaching Oxford undergraduates.
66 Crowe 2012.
67 Bourdieu 1986.
68 A full analysis of this area would require a look at the working of institutions of schooling. While Bourdieu did investigate patterns of success in examination, he had little to say about the institutional worlds of schools and universities; this is also true of the work of Basil Bernstein. See Archer 1983, and for a survey from the 1970s, Karabel and Halsey 1977; Bourdieu's ambivalent acceptance of academic language is interestingly discussed in Billig 2013: 40–6.

Chapter 8

1 Stafford 2012: 202–18 explores the Christian attributes of the post-pagan hero and the interest in his labours as a triumph of virtue over vice in her accomplished and detailed study of Herakles in his ancient and modern contexts. Galinsky 1972: 185–230 is the definitive source on Herakles' transition to *exemplar virtutis* (the model of virtue) and its philosophical as well as religious ramifications.
2 Stead forthcoming. The article on Eugene Sandow and the classics is, at time of writing, in preparation.
3 Stafford 2012: 3.
4 Linebaugh and Rediker 2000.
5 Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 61.
6 See Stafford 2012: 220.
7 Landes 1988: 19.
8 Landes 1988: 163–6.
9 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 147–9. In British Labour Movement iconography, Walter Crane managed to combine the revolutionary regalia of the French Revolution (particularly the *bonnet rouge* or Phrygian cap) with sexualized and elegant Liberty figures that bore no relation to women in struggle. The 1909 May Day poster 'Socialist Reconstruction versus Capitalist Constriction' sports just such a semi-allegorical female in a philanthropic and patronizing role, holding aloft the coiled serpent of exploitation 'like a feather boa'. The exclusion of all but representational women in British trade union art is discussed in depth in Ravenhill-Johnson's chapter, 'The Classical Woman'.
10 Hunt 1983: 104.
11 Blanshard 2005: xi–xviii.
12 Blanshard 2005: xv.
13 Blanshard 2005: 153.

14 Hall 2008: 393.
15 Gorman 1986: 50, where Ronald Caffyn's uncorroborated account of George Tutill's experience as a travelling showman is quoted. Tutill became central to banner production, creating a whole industry, which he monopolized for years; but caution has to be exercised in concluding, as Gorman does, that the products of his manufacturing monopoly provide evidence for the fairground origins of trade union banner art. In fact, Tutill makes a fascinating case study, as he was an accomplished artist and had paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy. Even if he did spend some time as a travelling showman, he cannot be characterized as a man of the people. See too Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 17.
16 Stead, forthcoming, cf. n. 2.
17 Blanshard 2005: 154; For Herculean heroes of labour who have followed in the wake of the banner, see the note by James (Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 208) on the Soviet Stakhanovite miner and related images in the socialist world. Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian* (8 October 2014) critiqued the exhibition in Moscow called 'The Twelve Labours of Hercules', in which Vladimir Putin was portrayed as the hero defeating oligarch beasts, the Hydra of Western sanctions, the Crimean ox and so on. The worker as a tower of strength in trade union banners (the Incredible Hulk in the 1979 banner of the Manchester branch of the General and Municipal Workers) or as St George defeating the dragon demonstrates a distinct affinity with Hercules and his labours.
18 Bram Stoker also transformed himself from a weedy adolescent to a strong and athletic adult, although his motivations were ideological as well as personal. See Killeen 2014.
19 Blanshard 2005: 155 notes that this very bulky Hercules was not built for speed. The Etruscans 'preferred to depict their version of Hercules as slim-hipped, almost feminine' and his labours required a combination of physical power and agility.
20 Wyke 1997: 51–6. Herculean strongmen have been paraded in popular entertainments, and the phenomenon has a rich history from appearances in theatres, fairground shows, circuses, films, television and video games.
21 Linebaugh and Rediker 2000.
22 See Chase 2012: 7.
23 Chase 2012: 84–5.
24 Chase 2012: 84.
25 Chase 2012: 86.
26 Linebaugh and Rediker 2000: 4.
27 Galinsky 1972, Blanshard 2005 and Stafford 2012 – in key works on Hercules – emphasize the range of attributes he displays and the way in which each mythical narrative, past and present, has highlighted his psychological and even physical ambiguities but sustained his stature as the archetypical hero.
28 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 78–81. On the strike see also http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/59/ (accessed 30 January 2015).

29 The employers were subsequently able to bankrupt unions with court actions for compensation whenever industrial action took place. Blacklegs were used to break strikes.
30 See James in Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 207, n. 18 and the discussion on p. 183 about these Herculean workers.
31 A clearly identifiable Hercules complete with the Nemean lion, tamed rather than defeated (in the key it is described as 'couchant in subjection to him'), is featured in the 1916 certificate of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. This heraldic(?) Hercules is more of a protective than an agitational figure.
32 See Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 47–53 for a detailed exegesis of the imagery, classical allusions and composition of the Sharples certificate. See also her chapter in this volume for the significance of Hephaistos for industry and the labouring classes.
33 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 80.
34 See Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 53–6 for full analysis. The *ouroboros*, the self-devouring and yet ever renewing serpent, is discussed at 28–9, and the snake as a positive signifier at 185–6.
35 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 174. Leighton's athlete is now in the Tate Gallery and can be viewed on their website: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/leighton-an-athlete-wrestling-with-a-python-n01754 (accessed 30 January 2015).
36 Ravenhill-Johnson has alerted me to the fact that the athlete's head in the Leighton sculpture was probably inspired by Michelangelo's depiction of the biblical David defeating the giant Goliath. This would set up a relationship between Hercules and David as monster-slayers. On Crane's Aesop, see also http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/51/ (accessed 30 January 2015).
37 (Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 174.) On the toned physique as a sign of moral superiority and its cultural colonization by the British upper classes, see James in Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 185. Again, Killeen 2014 notes the controversy and excitement generated by the Leighton sculpture and its impact upon Bram Stoker. As Maria Wyke concludes (1997: 5): 'the rhetoric of classicism imbued the practices of bodybuilding in the 1890s and presented the cultivation of male musculature as a high and improving art at which all men should aim'.
38 For Herculean heroes of labour who have followed in the wake of the banner, see the note by James on the Soviet Stakhanovite miner and related images in the socialist world (2013: 208). The worker as a tower of strength in trade union banners (the Incredible Hulk in the 1979 banner of the Manchester branch of the General and Municipal Workers), or as St George defeating the dragon, demonstrates a distinct affinity with Hercules and his labours.
39 The most detailed discussion to date on the range of meanings and allusions in the dockers' banner is to be found in Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013, and some aspects of this discussion have already been reprised and extended.
40 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 173.

41 Morris, and his ideological and aesthetic significance, is discussed in Boos and Silver 1989. See too Cumming and Kaplan 1991.
42 See Ravenhill-Johnson's chapter on Crane and his idealist, nostalgic and ultimately reactionary portrayals of workers in struggle in Ravenshill-Johnson and James 2013: 139–58.
43 Stafford 2012: 156–60.
44 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 186.
45 It is difficult to determine whether the banner Hercules is looking directly into the orbs of the snake, but, in spite of his lowered head, he does not actually avoid the gaze. Medusa with her snaky hair turned men into stone, but this is a tangential narrative in the Hercules arc of stories and unlikely to have been in the artist's mind.
46 The ruling class was, of course, perfectly capable of snatching back the symbol and restoring Hercules to the role of fighter for the establishment and against the workers of the world. See, for instance, the cartoon depicting an elongated and wily Ramsay MacDonald struggling with the python of the Communist Party in 1924, featured in Andrew Hall 2010: 128, which directly referenced Leighton's 'Athlete'.
47 The Capitoline Museum infant Hercules can be viewed here: http://en.museicapitolini.org/collezioni/percorsi_per_sale/palazzo_nuovo/galleria/fanciullo_raffigurato_come_ercole_che_strozza_i_serpenti (accessed 30 January 2015). The alternative legend is that Amphitryon supplied the snakes to uncover which baby was of divine descent – see Stafford 2012: 52–3. The banner Hercules is depicted with a rather large nappy-like loincloth!
48 See Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 173 for the allegorical interpretation of the defeat of the hydra at Lerna and the watery associations of this exploit.
49 It is incidental (coincidental) that the role of strongman Maciste in Giovanni Pastrone's epic silent movie *Cabiria* (1914, set at the time of the Carthaginian wars and based on Livy) was taken by an untrained dockworker. See Wyke 1997: 58.
50 Bosio's Hercules can be viewed online at http://worldarts.info/hercules-sculpture/#.VG7fuYusUm0 (accessed 30 January 2015).
51 Cerberus, the canine guardian in the Underworld, had three heads; Geryon had three heads and three bodies, and in some examples of ancient art he had a jumble of many limbs.
52 Stafford 2012: 46–7.
53 The clearest expression of the snake as the symbol of capitalism comes in the previously discussed May Day poster by Walter Crane. Liberty as a woman (albeit relatively demure and passive looking) was to become the vanquisher of various symbolic pythons in Crane's illustrations. Hercules' enemy was destined to last longer in Labour Movement iconography than the hero himself. The rather feeble female warrior was a signifier rather than a heroine of socialist labour.
54 Loraux 1990: 28.
55 Ravenhill-Johnson and James 2013: 78–9.
56 Gorman 1986: 127.

Chapter 9

1 Kierstead 2002: 59. The statue can be viewed at http://visitvulcan.com/about/ (accessed 31 January 2015).
2 Howell 2004.
3 Kierstead 2002: 62.
4 Hall 2011a.
5 Wheelwright 1940: 49.
6 In the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Reproduced in Bikker 2007: plate 14.
7 Taylor 1792: 197–8.
8 Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1. 20. 3; Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 7. 33–8; Hesiod, *Theogony* 560 ff.; Homer, *Iliad* 18. 417–20.
9 Burkert 1985: 167–8, 281–5.
10 See e.g. the Attic red-figure *skyphos* in Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio (Toledo 1982.88), dating to about 425 BC and viewable online as no. 11777 in the Beazley Archive (http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/pottery/default.htm).
11 Hall 2011b: 18. See, for example, the bronze Roman-era figurine of Vulcan found in North Yorkshire and published in Henig and Wilson 1982: 370–2, plate LIV.
12 Diogenes Laertius 44B; Aetius in the treatise *Concerning Nature* attributed to Plutarch, 46A.
13 See British Museum number 1935,0522.2.144.a, a Regency cartoon depicting weddings at Gretna Green being conducted by a blacksmith dressed as a parson, over Vulcan's anvil and hammer, viewable online at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx.
14 'To John Taylor' in Burns 1834, vol. 1: 130.
15 Coffman 1919: 61.
16 Anon. 1725.
17 British Museum, number 2012,4244.59, viewable online at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx. See further the discussion at http://edithorial.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/vulcans-ancient-and-modern.html.
18 British Museum, number MG.1053. Further details viewable online at http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx. See also the discussion at www.liobians.org/documents/pdfother/JAMESBLAKE.pdf.
19 Reproduced in Raynes 1921.
20 See further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/134/.
21 See further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/133/.
22 See further http://www.classicsandclass.info/product/44/.
23 http://public-art.shu.ac.uk/sheffield/rag89.html. 17/04/2013.
24 http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20025/lot/110/ 28/06/2014.
25 The sculpture was removed in 2009, stored in Gallery Pangolin, Stroud, Gloucestershire, and replaced by a sculpture by Abigail Fallis entitled DNA DL90, a double helix made out of shopping trolleys. http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/call-for-vulcan-statues-return-4394564. 17/06/2014.

Chapter 10

1 'The Training of an Imperial Race', *BMJ*, 24 November 1900: 1517.
2 George 1882: 1, 59.
3 Haggard 1899: ix.
4 Clarke 1899: 81; Griffiths 2005.
5 Clarke 1899: 42.
6 Clarke 1899: 87, 66.
7 Bury 1893: 593–4.
8 Potter 1880: 606–7.
9 Ibid: 633.
10 'Pandemic Plague', *BMJ*, 27 October 1900: 1247.
11 Jones 1907, 1: 4–5; Bynum 2004.
12 Jones 1907: 9–10.
13 Jones 1907: 15. See Reisz 2010: 222–5.
14 Jones 1907: 64–6.
15 Jones 1907: vi.
16 Jones 1907: 87–8.
17 'The Epidemic of Influenza', *BMJ*, 18 January 1890: 146.
18 'The Influenza', *Times*, 7 January 1890: 5.
19 'The Influenza', *Times*, 8 January 1890: 10.
20 See 'The Fresh Outbreak of Influenza . . .' *Times*, 7 May 1891: 9; 'The Epidemic of Influenza', *BMJ*, 9 January 1892: 77–8.
21 'The Influenza', *Times*, 7 January 1892: 7.
22 'Influenza Victims', *Times*, 2 July 1918: 3.
23 Gotch and Whittingham 1918: 82.
24 Mott et al. 1905: 1089; Sharpey-Schafer 2004.
25 Lauder 1887: 123–4.
26 Mottram 2004.
27 'Review of "The British Medical Association. 78th Annual Meeting, London, July 22nd to July 29th, 1910"', *BMJ*, 23 July 1910: 155.
28 Huntington 1913: 231.
29 Crean 1887: 34.
30 Crean 1887: 35–9.
31 Crean 1887: 41–2.
32 Russell 1897: 785.
33 Ibid: 787.
34 Schuster, Campbell and Mackintosh 1913: 230.
35 Farrar 1885: 5; Vance 2004.
36 Mott et al. 1905: 1089.
37 Russell 1897: 786.
38 'Medical Aspects of Crime', *BMJ*, 8 July 1899: 100.
39 Cowan 2004.
40 Galton 1892: 329. Galton's original article 'Hereditary Talent and Character' appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* (1865).

41 Galton 1892: 330. Galton subsequently revised his estimate; see Challis 2013: 56.
42 Galton 1892: 331.
43 Galton 1892: 221–2.
44 Galton 1892: 157.
45 Galton 1892: 214, 176, 158.
46 'The Father of Eugenics', *BMJ*, 21 February 1914: 445; Harris, *Journal of Anthropology*, July 1870: 57.
47 Galton 1873: 9.
48 Review of 'Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development by Francis Galton', *Science*, 20 July 1883: 80.
49 Mouat 1880: 188.
50 Crean 1887: 34.
51 Russell 1897: 785.
52 Mott et al. 1905: 1086.
53 Greg 1868, lxxvii: 353–63; Rose 2004.
54 Ballantyne 1910: 451.
55 Ibid: 450.
56 Coates 1909: 1045; Plarr's Lives of Fellows Online: http://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/biogs/E004961b.htm (accessed 2014).
57 Church 1904: 229; Garrod 2004.
58 Church 1904: 231.
59 'The Sanitary Congress', *BMJ*, 13 September 1902: 814.
60 See Stead 2015 on the labours of the class-conscious historian of British classics.
61 Coates 1909: 1049.
62 'The Problem of the Army', *Times*, 11 April 1903: 5.
63 Webb 2004.
64 Ransome 1887: 4–5; Simpson 1887: 73.
65 Kingsley 1880: 28. Kingsley, like Galton, 'tapped into an adulation of the ancient past and anxiety about the strength of the present' (Challis 2013: 62).
66 Searle 2004.
67 White 1886: 224–5.
68 Kingsley 1880: 27.
69 See Lowry 2000: 222; Soloway 1982a: 137.
70 Galton 1904a: 2–3.
71 Galton 1904b: 7.
72 Ibid: 10.
73 Ibid: 21.
74 Galton 1909: 70.
75 Shaw 2004: 27.
76 Pearson 1909a: 34.
77 Pearson 1909b: 25.
78 Manson 1912: 123–4.
79 Roper 1913: 58.
80 Schuster et al. 1913: 226.

81 Ibid: 225–6.
82 Ibid: 223.
83 Ibid: 230.
84 Roper 1913: 41–2.
85 Ibid: 45–6.
86 Greg 1870: 70.
87 Pearson 1909b: 24–5.
88 Ibid: 23–4.
89 *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation*, 1908, 9 (1): 10–13.
90 White 1886: 204.
91 Rentoul 1906: 319.
92 Ibid: 321, 323.
93 Ballantyne 1910: 455.
94 Schuster 1912: 31–2.
95 Mott et al. 1905: 1088.
96 Ballantyne 1910: 452.
97 Coates 1909: 1047.
98 Galton 1904a: 3.
99 Ballantyne 1910: 449, 450.
100 Ibid: 451.
101 Coates 1909: 1047.
102 Pearson 1909a: 28, 29.
103 Harris 1870: 59.
104 Galton 1892: 157.
105 West 1997: 4. 4.
106 'Eugenics', *BMJ*, 23 August 1913: 509.
107 König 1904: 966.
108 Ibid: 968–9. Philanthropists Susanna Meredith and Mary Anne Lloyd ran the experiment at Addlestone; Forsythe 2004.
109 König 1904: 971.
110 Schuster et al. 1913: 224.
111 Vanderlip 1919: 34–5.
112 Mott 1923: 38, 41.
113 Schiller 1925: 11.
114 Tredgold 1927: 386; Thomson 2004.
115 Bond 1928: 315.
116 Carr-Saunders 1926: 22–3; Brown 2004.
117 Carr-Saunders 1926: 183.
118 Allen et al. 1921: 261.
119 Darwin 1919: 31; Bowler 2004.
120 Darwin 1919: 16; Edwards 2004.
121 Darwin 1926: 317, 326.
122 Petrie 1907: 34.
123 Ibid: 37–8.

124 Ibid: 88. Pick 1989: 218 argues: 'the socio-biological theory of degeneration emerged in and beyond the 1880s most powerfully as a counter-theory to mass-democracy and socialism'.
125 Inge 1923: 2–3; Grimley 2004.
126 'Mental Deficiency', *BMJ*, 11 October 1930: 607–8. For information on the Wood Committee see Jones 1960: 84.
127 Blacker et al. 1930: 159; Spencer 2004.
128 Chesterton 2000: 13.
129 Newsholme 1923: 15; Eyler 2004.
130 Newsholme 1923: 23–9.
131 Thomson 1923: 89, 90, 92.
132 Scharlieb 1923: 125, 127; Jones 2004.
133 Soloway 1982b: 141 claimed that the 'eugenic campaign' peaked in 1914 when Britons 'proved' they exceeded the vigor and adaptability of 'their enemies' and 'most of their allies'.
134 Haire claimed that 'Eugenic sterilization' had proved a 'great benefit' in some American states and argued it was of 'minor import' that prominent members of society known to be born to 'defectives' would be lost by legalizing sterilization. Haire 1922: 109.
135 See Butler 2012: 147–68 and Alston in this volume.
136 Soloway 1982b: 141.

Chapter 11

1 Howard 1898; 1902.
2 Alston 2012.
3 Celebration's urban plan comes from Urban Design Associates, led by Ray Gindroz, a leading light in the New Urbanism movement. See http://www.urbandesignassociates.com (accessed 30 January 2015).
4 Ruskin 1889 [1st edn 1849]); 1858.
5 See Hall 2010.
6 Faulkner and Greg 1987; Liscombe 1980.
7 Salmon 2000: 210–26.
8 For the diversity of causes related to the Garden City movement see Gurney 1910: 35–53.
9 As argued in Alston 2012. See also the earlier and prescient remarks of Engels 1936.
10 For the intellectual background to Howard, see Beevers 1988; Buder 1990; Fishman 1977; Hall 1988.
11 Figures from Gibson 1998.
12 Buder 1990: 6–28.
13 Smith 2006; Gilbert 1991.
14 See Marshall 1992.

15 Bellamy 1888.
16 Beevers 1988: 22; Buder 1990: 34–57.
17 See Kropotkin 1888: 513–30.
18 Kropotkin 1906.
19 Kropotkin 1899.
20 Richardson 1876; Morris 1970; Carpenter 1899. See Buckingham 1849, Watson 1890 and the three volumes of utopian writing collected by Greg Claeys 2009. For the vibrant tradition of nineteenth-century utopianism, see Roemer in Claeys (ed.) 2010: 79–106.
21 Barnett and Barnett 1915. Barnett learned much from Octavia Hill's authoritarian social work: see Hill 1875.
22 For newspaper coverage, see 'THE "GARDEN CITY" CONFERENCE: A VISIT TO BOURNVILLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE', *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 September 1901: 10; 'The Garden City Association', *The Times*, 21 September 1901: 12; 'The Housing Question', *The Times*, 23 September 1901: 9; 'The Garden City Association', *The Times*, 12 December 1901: 3; 'Garden Cities and the Housing Question', *The Times*, 28 July 1902: 12; 'GARDEN CITIES', Mr. Ralph Neville, K.C., *The Times*, 22 April 1904: 1.
23 It is hard not to see social and intellectual snobbery lurking behind this dismissal of Howard (George Bernard Shaw was particularly dismissive). See Beevers 1988: esp. 70–1.
24 'The Garden City Estate', *The Observer* (London), 11 October 1903: 3; 'A Garden City, *Times* (London), 7 October 1903: 8. See http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=202214 (accessed 10 July 2014). For Unwin's theory, see Unwin 1909.
25 'Hampstead-Heath Extension and a "Garden Suburb"', *The Times*, 27 December 1904: 5. See also the anecdotes collected in Meacham 1999: 146–77.
26 See the listings in Miller 2002: 6–28 and for Howard's legacy, see Hall and Ward 1998.
27 See the timber cottages designed by Troup (1905) (RIBA 50259; RIBA 50250) and the 'arts and crafts' terraces (RIBA 9863; 9850) and somewhat grander houses (RIBA 3306–51; RIBA 5934) by Parker and Unwin at http://www.ribapix.com/index.php.
28 See RIBA 10624; RIBA 17967; RIBA 80842; RIBA 80845 for Parker and Unwin designs and RIBA 21358 for similar designs from Lucas (all at http://www.ribapix.com/index.php).
29 Meacham 1999: 161–3. Lutyens appears not to have quite understood the principles advocated by his client, Henrietta Barnett, leading to friction between the pair. See RIBA 80849 for the Free Church and RIBA 2928–28 for St Jude's. For more grandiose Lutyens designs for Hampstead Garden Suburb, see RIBA 2969 and RIBA 33168, though Lutyens also worked in the 'arts and crafts' style for housing.
30 Litchfield 1922.
31 Benoît-Lévy 1905; 1911; 1932; Kafkoula 2013.
32 Feugas et al. 1998. For his later views, see Le Corbusier 1987: esp. 175–247.
33 Domhardt 2012; Kafkoula 2013; Wakeman 2014.

34 See Marshall 1992; Conrad 1907.
35 For Geddes, see Welter 2002; Meller 1990; Scott and Bromley 2013.
36 Branford and Farquharson 1924; Geddes 1915: 225, for the Thames Valley schematic.
37 Branford and Geddes 1917. For the intellectual history, see Alston 2012.
38 See the discussion in Honohan 2002 and Alston in Alston and van Nijf 2010: 307–36.
39 See http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=207133 (accessed 17 July 2014) and 'Leslie Patrick Abercrombie: A Centenary Note', *The Town Planning Review* 50 (1979), 257–64.
40 Jones 1988.
41 Meller 1997: 48–61.
42 Wales 1989. The influence of Krier is obvious throughout the text, which is in many ways a polemical reply to Le Corbusier, particularly pages 76–98.
43 Duany et al. 2011 (which I have not seen). See also http://www.dpz.com/Initiatives/AgrarianUrbanism and for the architectural projects, see http://www.dpz.com/Projects/Allb (both accessed 17 July 2014). For Seaside's architecture, see http://www.seasidefl.com/history/architecture.
44 Philip Johnson's long career took him from full-blown fascist in the 1930s to pillar of the art establishment. His architecture was stylistically varied, depending on who knocked at his door.
45 See http://venturiscottbrown.org/pdfs/WaltDisneyCelebrationBank01.pdf (accessed 23 September 2014).
46 Conn 2014: and especially pages 277–306 for 'new urbanism'.
47 See the classic studies of Harvey 1979 on Paris, and Atkinson and Cosgrove 1988 on Rome.
48 As proposed in Lefebvre 1991 and Soja 1996.
49 Krier 1985.
50 Scobie 1990 argues that there is nothing intrinsically fascistic in neoclassical architecture, though that is to miss the point.
51 Sudjic 2006 argues that architecture has a profound appeal for totalitarians, whose passion is often to remake the world in their own images. Architects are depressingly often bought and seduced into cooperation.
52 Krier 2009; 1981. Also, see the discussion in de la Ruffinière du Prey 1994.
53 Howard and Morris, in their neo-medievalism, promised not an anti-city, but no city, literally Nowhere.
54 Rancière 2004, notably page 13.
55 See Armstrong 2005: 1–3 for Freud's experience of the Athenian acropolis as 'derealization', a disturbing sense of being in the unreal world. Typically, Freud thought his experience was something to do with his father rather than the shock of being in a realm of dreams.
56 See Zukin 2010 on the 'selling' of authenticity in urban spaces.
57 Lefebvre 1996. My argument runs contrary to Michel de Certeau 1984: 91–110, for whom walking the city has disruptive and liberating potential, since I see walking as normal, determined by urban rhythms.

58 Le Corbusier 1986: 289 concludes with a final sentence: 'Revolution can be avoided.'
59 For example, Fowler 1893 and Zimmern 1911. Also, Wells 1906.
60 See, for example, Hall 1998: 24–86, moving from the 'fountainhead' of civilization, Athens, straight to Florence; Gates and Stout 1996; selected excerpts from Kitto 1951: 64–78, for all that one needs to know about the classical ideal of urbanism. Mumford 1961: 186–213 offers fifth-century Athens as a paradigmatic ideal, whereas Rome is a 'Necropolis'.

Chapter 12

1 Caird 1894: ch. 18.
2 Bland 1987; Ardis 1990; on the new gender politics of the 1890s see especially Rubinstein 1986.
3 Hall and Macintosh 2005: chapters 15–16; Hall 2012: 231–6.
4 Ruyter 1973: 389–91; Hall 2012: 202–3. For the connection between Greek myth, especially Greek drama, and feminism in this period see also Hall 2015.
5 Hall and Macintosh 2005: 514–15.
6 Surridge 2005.
7 Glasier's fiction is well discussed in Waters 1993.
8 This was the direct forerunner of 'Clause IV' of the manifesto of the Labour Party (removed under pressure from Tony Blair in 1995): 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange . . .'
9 Collette 1989: 16; Schuche 2001; Beaumont 2006.
10 Katharine Glasier's diary, along with the forty-nine boxes of Glasier papers, remained for many years in the possession of the Glasier family, and were used and quoted from extensively by Thompson 1971. They can now be consulted in the Special Collections and Archives of the University of Liverpool.
11 Soldon 1978: 59.
12 Hannam and Hunt 2002: 34. See Glasier 1914 for her own account of women's role in the early days of the ILP.
13 Collette 1989: 16.
14 Thompson 1971: 58.
15 Thompson 1971: 59–60.
16 See Binfield 2002: 173–4.
17 See NSWS 1879: 48, where Pearse writes: 'I cannot see why, if women desire the Franchise, they should not have it, particularly as they are now eligible to vote for School Board candidates.'
18 See the video talk by Justine McConnell and Henry Stead at http://www.classicsandclass.info/project/01/ (accessed 31 January 2015).
19 Bruce 1903: 159.

20 Bruce 1903: 165.
21 Bruce 1903: 172.
22 Quoted in Bruce 1903: 167–9.
23 Hamilton 1936: 140.
24 Thompson 1971: 62–3.
25 Thompson 1971: 64.
26 Glasier 1896: 124.
27 See *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* for Tuesday, 25 November 1890 (issue 13272).
28 Thompson 1971: 65.
29 See e.g. two articles headed 'Redcliff Street Strike', in *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, for Saturday, 12 November 1892 (issue 13886) and Monday, 14 November 1892 (issue 13887), respectively.
30 Cowman 2004: 23 and n. 26.
31 Pankhurst 1931: 127.
32 See further Tuckett 1980–1 and Glasier 1924.
33 On which see Collette 1987.
34 Thompson 1971: 134–7.
35 Glasier 1895: 1, 5.
36 Glasier 1895: 80.
37 Collette 1989: 20.
38 Glasier 1909: 2.
39 Glasier 1909: 3.
40 Glasier 1926: 8, 32, 61, 50.
41 Glasier 1894: 1; Carpenter 1889.
42 Glasier, J. B. 1921: 102.
43 On the exceptional importance of Morris to the thought of the new socialists of the 1880s and 1890s, see especially Levy 1987: 92–3.
44 Glasier, J. B. 1921: 45, 67–8, 81, 99–100, 166.
45 Thompson 1971: 230–4.
46 Thompson 1971: 242.
47 For a wonderfully detailed account of women's involvement in local government before they became eligible to take part in parliamentary politics, see Hollis 1989, who (most unusually) is aware of the significance of Mary Bridges Adams (see 14, 66, 123, and 125, with the comments of Martin 2010a: 8).
48 Martin 2010a: 83.
49 Martin 2010b: 25 n. 13.
50 Martin 2010a: 27 and the letter from Notcutt to Mary quoted at 45 n. 22. See also Tuke 1939: 131, 147, 151, 163, 308–9.
51 Martin 2010a: 27.
52 London Metropolitan Archive, London School Board Minutes, 2 May 1895, 1128, quoted in Martin 2010a: 83–4.
53 Martin 2010a: 59.
54 Martin 2010b: 13.
55 Martin 2010b: 14–15.

56 Martin 2010a: 95–7.
57 Rowbotham 1977: 92.
58 Hamilton 1936.
59 Hamilton 1924: 9.

Chapter 13

1 I should like to acknowledge the contributions to this essay of the staff of the TUC Library, London Metropolitan University, and audiences at the Classical Association conference, University of Reading, 2013, and the Classics in Extremis conference, University of Durham, 2014.
2 Roberts 2003: 3.
3 See for instance the connections with Margaret McMillan, pioneer of nursery schools; Mansbridge 1932.
4 http://www.wea.org.uk/about, consulted February 2014.
5 *Annual Report*, 1906.
6 See Fieldhouse 1977: 1–2 on these institutions.
7 Rose 2001: 65. The 1846 *Manual for Mechanics*, in its outline of lectures, certainly seems to adhere to an anti-democratic line.
8 Goldman 1995: 124.
9 Figures from *The Workers' Educational Association: A Review 1946–1952*: 7.
10 Roberts 2003: 2.
11 Inglis 2013: 104.
12 Fieldhouse 1977: 8, 12.
13 Macintyre 1980: 89.
14 Ibid: 89–90.
15 Goldman 1995: 177–85.
16 Ibid: 180. See also Rose 2001: chapter 8.
17 Fieldhouse 1977: 21–2.
18 Goldman 1995: 302.
19 Ibid: 249.
20 Ibid: 128.
21 Simon 1965: 327. See also Macintyre 1980: 88 on the predominantly working-class students of the 1920s.
22 Fieldhouse 1977: 19.
23 Rose 2001: 295–6.
24 Goldman 1995: 301.
25 Why it is 'Greece' rather than Rome that usually figures in these documents could be discussed in more detail, but the allegiances of the university tutors go some way to explaining it.
26 Mansbridge 1920: 42.
27 See Williamson 2010: 84; but she stresses the talismanic protection against possible threat, whereas I am invoking it only as a sign of boundary-crossing.

28 Childs 1904: 17–18.
29 *Annual Report* 1908: 29.
30 *North-West District Report* 1914: 8. In fact, the language of 'experiment' is still being used in 1926 of Greek philosophy (*South Wales District Annual Report* p. 13).
31 See *The Highway*, 1913, v. 53: 62–5 and 82–5, and v. 55: 122–5.
32 *The Highway*, 1911, iii. 35: 173, 188. Lavena Saltonstall has achieved further posthumous significance not only in Rose 2001: 267 and 278, but also as a suffragette featured in Liddington 2006.
33 *The Highway*, 1915, vii. 80: 132–3.
34 *The Highway*, 1914, vi. 69: 173; in 1914, vi. 71: 213; 1915, vii. 85: 31.
35 *The Highway*, 1919, xi. 7: 63.
36 *The Highway*, 1913, v. 54: 111.
37 The references are to the Annual Report for the Welsh District, for the relevant year(s).
38 *The Highway*, March 1923, xv: 93.
39 *The Highway*, July 1926, xviii: 104.
40 *Annual Report*, South Wales District, 22.
41 Tatton 2003: 238.
42 Halpern 1959–60.
43 Begbie 1918: 105.
44 Goldman 2004.
45 Begbie 1918: 108–9.
46 Rose 2001: 8.
47 Rowbotham 1981: 63.
48 Turner 1981: 61. See also Stray 1998.
49 Begbie 1918: 187.
50 Fieldhouse 1977: 13.
51 Mansbridge 1920: 65.
52 Cobham 1920: 218.
53 Ibid: 217.
54 Sylvester 1974: 118. See also Marcham 1973.
55 *The Highway*, 1911, iii. 29: 66.
56 *The Highway*, 1917, ix. 101: 91.
57 Stocks 1968: 78.
58 Stray 1998: 222.
59 *The Labour Leader*, 4 March 1910: 132.
60 *The Highway*, 1910, ii. 18: 102.
61 *The Highway*, 1909, i. 9: 140.
62 *The Highway*, 1910, ii. 18: 89.
63 *The Highway*, 1910, ii. 20: 135.
64 *The Highway*, 1910, iii. 27: 38–9.

Chapter 14

1 For an eyewitness account by a man who fought alongside Caudwell, see Gurney 1974.
2 For example, Denis Healey; see Simpson in this volume.
3 Sullivan 1987: 48, although he mistakenly believes it is a translation from a poem in Latin.
4 The most important exception is Sullivan 1987: 18, who argues persuasively that Caudwell 'may well find his true place in intellectual history as a twentieth-century *philosophe* who was fascinated by ideology in all its guises'.
5 Caudwell 1937: 80.
6 See especially Thompson 1977; 1995; Eagleton 1976: 137; for all of the relevant references see Gallagher 2013: 683–4; the comments on these critics in Sullivan 1987: 3–4 are eloquent.
7 Bounds 2012: 7.
8 Caudwell 1937: ch. 11.
9 Caudwell 1986: 125–6. 'Classic Encounter' is his only poem which has appeared in several anthologies, beginning with the *Everyman's Library* volume *Poems of Our Time*, ed. Church and Bozman, 1942: 276.
10 Hall 2008: ch. 15.
11 Clough 1859: 202.
12 Thorndike, quoted in Harrison 2005.
13 See Arnot 1967: 185–6; Klugmann 1968: 13–74.
14 Hamilton 2010: 39.
15 Hill 1990: 11. See also the heavy emphasis on authors of literature in English in Kettle 1975: 2. There are useful biographies and bibliographies of most of these figures in Paananen 2000 and Bounds 2012.
16 Hall and Stead, forthcoming.
17 See especially Caesar 1991: 5.
18 Cornford Senior had been lecturer in Classics at Cambridge from 1904, and was appointed Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy in 1931. Among his most important works were *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907), *The Athenian Philosophical Schools* (1927), *From Religion to Philosophy* (1912) and *Greek Religious Thought* (1923). But see also e.g. his *Poems of George Meredith: A Lecture Delivered at the Working Men's College, London, on 21 March 1903*.
19 For Germany see Klaus 1978; for France, Duparc 1979.
20 Cunningham 1988: 21 divides writers of the 1930s into the Oxford camp (Waugh, Connolly, Greene, Betjeman, Anthony Powell) and the Cambridge one (John Lehmann, Malcolm Lowry, Kathleen Raine, Hugh Sykes Davies). Caudwell is bracketed off as one of the 'maverick authors' (along with George Orwell, V. S. Pritchett and Samuel Beckett) who attended neither university.
21 Whetter 2011: 26.
22 Letter of 5 January 1895, quoted in full by Whetter 2011: 14–15.
23 Whetter 2011: 34.
24 Whetter 2011: 46–7.
25 Whetter 2011: 102.

26 Remark made to Paul Beard, quoted in Whetter 2011: 100.
27 Sullivan 1987: 29.
28 *The Perfect Alibi* was admired by Dorothy L. Sayers, who reviewed it positively in the *Sunday Times*, 7 July 1934.
29 Heinemann 1988: 118–19.
30 Strachey 1932: 896.
31 Quoted in Whetter 2011: 142.
32 Whetter 2011: 155.
33 West 1969: 181–2.
34 Letter from Louis Harap in *Worker* (1946), quoted from Sullivan 1987: 41.
35 The full lists are reproduced in Whetter 2011: 161–2.
36 Tony Gilbert, quoted in Whetter 2011: 161.
37 Quoted in Sullivan 1987: 20.
38 Gurney 1974: 71.
39 He also appointed Benedict abbot of the Monastery of St Peter and St Paul in Canterbury. Historians of education often claim that the colleges in the older English universities are the lineal descendants of the Benedictine schools of Charlemagne.
40 Caudwell 1986: 33.
41 Caudwell 1986: 32.
42 Caudwell 1986: 36.
43 See the astute comments of Fowler 1977. West 1975: 182–3 said that *Illusion and Reality* had fundamentally changed his own and other communists' views on the nature of the relationship between economic reality and poetry.
44 Caudwell 1986: 88.
45 Eliot 1920: 35–6.
46 Caudwell 1937: 56.
47 See Macintosh, Michelakis, Hall and Taplin 2005: 376.
48 See Macintosh, Michelakis, Hall and Taplin 2005: 372.
49 Unpublished; quoted in full in Whetter 2011: 49.
50 Information from Sullivan 1987: 34–7.
51 Caudwell 1936: 9.
52 Caudwell 1936: 32.
53 Sullivan 1987: 56–7.
54 Pawling 1989.
55 Mulhern 1974: 51.
56 Caudwell 1986: 99.
57 Sullivan 1987: 91, in reference to Baudouin 1924: 111.
58 Bounds 2012: 161–78.
59 Sullivan 1987: 98 and Solomon 1973: 311.
60 Caudwell 1937: 29, 130.
61 Thompson 1995: 313–14.
62 Thomson 1951, responding to Cornforth 1950–1. See further Klaus 1989.
63 Margolies 1969, especially 61–2.
64 Caudwell 1946: 58.

65 Margolies 1969: 61.
66 Butcher 1902: 14.
67 Caudwell 1946: 58.
68 Caudwell 1946: 58. After a digression on Plato, he returns to this theme: Aristotle, he writes, is uninterested in the poet's mind, and does not concern himself with whether or not the creation and appreciation of poetry is a conscious function.
69 Margolies 1969: 122.
70 Reproduced in Eliot 1950: 452–60.
71 Cunningham 1988: 23.
72 Ewart 1939: no. xiii.
73 MacNeice 1979: 79, 126.
74 See further Tait 1984.
75 Here quoted from the translation of the *Resolution* in Lenin 1965: 300–13 (my emphasis).
76 Letter to Elizabeth Beard, 30 November 1935, quoted from Whetter 2011: 149.
77 Thompson 1972: 13.
78 Caudwell 1986: 177.

Chapter 15

1 James 2013: 57. All further page references to this work will appear in the body of the text.
2 Both artistic licence, and the fact that the colours of the French tricolour were lightened in the twentieth century by the then-president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, account for the blue of the flag being labelled black here.
3 The play (James 2013) is now published by Duke University Press, edited and introduced by Høgsbjerg.
4 This elision was compounded by the play *The Black Jacobins* being reproduced in *The C.L.R. James Reader*, edited by Anna Grimshaw (1992), where it is incorrectly dated as having been written in 1936.
5 For example, Kaplan 1998: 53–6 and Langerwerf 2011: 356. Naturally, the absence of the earlier play-text at that time makes this error entirely understandable.
6 Griggs and Prator 1952: 17.
7 Hall 2011a: 16–18.
8 James 1989: 25.
9 On Beard, see also Stray in this volume above p. 127.
10 Métral and Toussaint Louverture 1825: 329. Toussaint's son, Isaac, mentioned his father's knowledge of 'the example of captains of the ancient world, – Lucullus, Pompey, Caesar' ('à l'exemple des capitaines de l'antiquité, des Lucullus, des Pompée, et des César'). Likewise, Martineau (1841) mentions Caesar's *Commentaries* as being among Toussaint's reading.

11 Hall 1992: 8.
12 James 1935.
13 James 2013: 173–5: *The Stage* (19 March 1936).
14 James 1935: emphasis in original.
15 James 2013: 161. The Author's Note of the original 1936 programme states that 'The play was conceived four years ago and was completely finished by the autumn of 1934.' Nevertheless, it is highly likely that James continued to make amendments to his play during the rehearsal process, particularly as it is clear that he took such an active role in the production that he was able to step in as Fennell's understudy for the second performance.
16 Dalleo 2014.
17 Nizhny 1962: 27.
18 Dimitrov 1972 [1935].
19 With thanks to Henry Stead for this connection.
20 Scott 2004: 15 and *passim*. Scott's overarching thesis is that the narrative mode of anti-colonialism was romance, but that in a postcolonial era this must be replaced with a tragic prism through which we view history and the relationships between past, present and future.
21 Rabbitt 1995: 120, 121. Stuart Hall 1992: 9 had also noted that *The Black Jacobins* 'is well theorized and wonderfully narrated, with a sense of drama clearly linked to the play James had completed earlier'.
22 Hall 1998: 27.
23 James 1989: 291.
24 Hall 2011b.
25 Hall 2011b: 233, 235.
26 Scott 2004: 173–5. On James's socialist reading at this time, see Widgery 1989: 123.
27 Greenwood 2010: 70–1, 96–104.
28 Greenwood 2010: 188–206 focuses on this by examination of three of James's works: 'Every Cook Can Govern: A Study of Democracy in Ancient Greece' (1956), 'The Artist in the Caribbean' (1959) and *Beyond a Boundary* (1963).
29 Castoriadis 1995: especially 277 and 287.
30 James 1977: 160–74. For illuminating discussion of James's views of Athenian democracy, see Greenwood 2010: 188–92, who observes that his perspective on Athenian society was a highly idealized one, which attempted to sidestep the extremely problematic exclusions of women and slaves from the democratic society which James praises.
31 James 1977: 163.
32 James 1963: 156; quoted in Lazarus 1992: 96.
33 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986: 36–7.
34 James 1990: 8.
35 James 1989: 292.
36 Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 2013: 4.
37 Macintosh 2013: 309–25. On the struggle between radical and conservative views of the chorus in the long nineteenth century, see Hall 2014.

38 See James 2013: 164–86.
39 See Foley 2007 for discussion of the way a number of modern theatre practitioners have approached the chorus.
40 James 1990: 8.
41 Harris 2014.
42 James 1993: 156–7. He had expressed a similar idea in 'Popular Art and the Cultural Tradition' (James 1990: 10): 'if Aeschylus, Shakespeare or the author of *Tartuffe* and *Don Juan* (I am not sure of Racine) came back today, they would take one glance around and immediately buy a plane ticket for Hollywood, in order to make contact with the popular audience of the world'. Interestingly, a number of reviewers of *Toussaint Louverture* commented that it would have been better suited to cinema than to the stage.
43 Du Bois 2003: 134–6.
44 Battezzato 2005: 155; Schwartz 1887–91: 198: ἔπειτα καὶ ἀεὶ ὁ χορὸς ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ ποιητοῦ εἰσάγεται τῷ δικαίῳ προστιθέμενος.
45 Schlegel 1846: 70. Following Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 2013: 6, 40, I have adjusted Black's translation 'the ideal spectator' to 'the idealized spectator', to avoid the (incorrect) sense that Schlegel is suggesting that the chorus's reactions are always the best ones.
46 James 1990: 8.
47 Osborne 2006: 21.
48 Swindall 2011: 22–3.
49 Robeson speaking to Sergei Eisenstein in Moscow in 1934, quoted in Seton 1958: 94–5.
50 Robeson 1935.
51 See Forsdick and Høgsbjerg 2014 for details of this unrealized project, the obstacles in its path, and the importance of the Haitian Revolution to both Eisenstein and Robeson.
52 Forsdick and Høgsbjerg 2014: 173, following Leyda, suggest that Shumyatsky's opposition to the project (along with his resistance to much of Eisenstein's work) may have caused the final cancellation of the planned film.
53 James 1989: 281.
54 Eisenstein 1977: 232–3.
55 Eisenstein 1987: 363.
56 Høgsbjerg very helpfully collates and reprints the notices and reviews of the play in James 2013: 155–86.
57 *The Stage*, 19 March 1936, reprinted in James 2013: 173–5.
58 *Glasgow Herald*, 18 March 1936, reprinted in James 2013: 173. The proviso 'in negro history', however, does suggest that the writer feels the need to help orientate his readers, who may not, after all, be familiar with the story of Toussaint L'Ouverture; it could also suggest a qualification to the importance the writer is attaching to the figure of Toussaint, but this reading goes against the timbre of the review as a whole.
59 Alan Dent, 'Mr. Paul Robeson as Toussaint: A Documentary Play', *Manchester Guardian*, 17 March 1936, reprinted in James 2013: 168.

60 *New York Times*, 16 March 1936; *Daily Telegraph*, 17 March 1936; *Evening Standard*, 17 March, 1936, reprinted in James 2013: 164, 168.
61 J. G. Bergel, 'Paul Robeson; Stage Society Show Does Not Give Him Great Part', *Evening News*, 17 March 1936, reprinted in James 2013: 169.

Chapter 16

1 The Wilson governments ran from October 1964 to March 1966, March 1966 to June 1970, February 1974 to October 1974, and October 1974 to March 1976. The focus of the present chapter is chiefly on 1964–70.
2 See Wilson 1964: 27.
3 Pimlott 1992: 516–17 detects some resistance from some ex-classicists to Fulton, although Roy Jenkins was clearly the ringleader and did some political wheeler-dealing.
4 One model for this inquiry is Bebbington 2008: 86–97 on Gladstone.
5 I use 'Classics' throughout to refer to the discipline(s) and 'classics' to designate the artefacts recognized and taught within the discipline(s), cf. page 3 of this volume.
6 See Radice 2002 for other relations among some of these individuals.
7 Healey 1992: 46–7.
8 Healey 1992: 47.
9 Healey 1992: 66.
10 See Edith Hall's chapter on Caudwell in the present volume.
11 Healey 1992: 72.
12 Stewart 1980: 20.
13 Stewart 1980: 20.
14 Stewart 1980: 16–17.
15 Crossman 1975–7: 354w.
16 Dalyell 1989: 15, 25.
17 See Jay 1980: 27–33 for an account of his classical education. Plato, at 27, is the one point of enduring impact on him.
18 See Jay 1980: 21, 24.
19 Jay 1937: 1.
20 Jay 1937: 1.
21 Jay 1937: 1.
22 Keynes's emphasis on stimulating investment, for example, when saving reduces demand below the threshold of full employment, is reorientated by Jay towards stimulating consumption (Jay 1937: 192).
23 See D'Angour 2011.
24 Jay 1937: 26.
25 Jay 1937: 28.
26 Jay 1937: 28–9.
27 Simpson 2013.
28 Crossman 1963: 55.

29 See Crossman 1975: 11–12 on the evolving strategy of the *Diaries*.
30 Crossman 1963: 26.
31 Crossman 1963: 27.
32 Crossman 1963: 27.
33 Healy 1989: 146.
34 See Powell 1991: 379. On 20 April 1968, Powell addressed the Conservative Political Centre in Birmingham with a speech criticizing inward immigration from the Commonwealth and proposed anti-discrimination legislation. Widely reported, the speech was, and is, regarded by many as racist and/or as promoting racial hatred.
35 Healy 1989: 530.
36 Healy 1989: 538.
37 Healy 1989: 464.
38 See Paula James's chapter in the present volume.
39 Stewart 1980: 20.
40 Stewart 1980: 43.
41 Stewart 1980: 21.
42 Stewart 1980: 277.
43 Jay 1980: 347 uses 'nemesis' to describe a crucial reversal of fortunes for the Labour governments of the 1960s.
44 David Marquand's review (1981) of Stewart's book, along with Jay 1980, is tellingly titled 'Nemesis'.
45 Crosland 2006: 236.
46 Crosland 1982: 172.
47 *Odyssey*, XII. 201–59.
48 *Odyssey*, IX. 105–566.
49 *Odyssey*, XXIII. 205–365.
50 *Odyssey*, XXIII. 205–365.
51 Adorno and Horkheimer 1977, which Crosland may well have known, models Odysseus' cunning as the originary rationality of commercial society. See further Hall 2008: chapters 7 and 11.
52 Crosland subsequently stood for election, unsuccessfully, to the leadership of the parliamentary Labour Party, upon Harold Wilson's resignation in March 1976.
53 Anthony Howard 1997, among others, called Crosland a 'philosopher-king'.

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